



THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 117.

Price, Five Cents.

BUFFALO BILL AND THE DOOMED THIRTEEN

OR
OUT ON THE SILVER TRAIL



THE AUTHOR OF
"BUFFALO BILL"

BUFFALO BILL, BALANCING HIMSELF WITH WONDERFUL SKILL ON THE BUFFALO'S BACK, FIRED, AND THE LEADING WARRIOR
DROPPED FROM HIS PONY.



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Buffalo Bill and the Doomed Thirteen;

OR,

OUT ON THE SILVER TRAIL.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

CHAPTER I.

FOR LIFE OR DEATH.

"There's Injuns behind the buffaloes!"

The speaker was Buffalo Bill, the great Western scout.

When he uttered the words that open this story, he was standing upon the stout limb of a solitary tree that stood like a sentinel in the middle of a vast prairie.

With one hand he clung to a branch for support, and with the other he shaded his eyes and glanced out over the plain, while a certain look of anxiety rested upon his fine face.

And, as he looked, his long, dark-brown hair floating back behind him, fanned by the stiff breeze that was blowing, there came to his ears a sound like the low rumble of distant thunder.

Louder and louder it grew, and nearer and nearer came the cause—an immense herd of buffaloes flying like the wind over the prairie.

It was the thundering sound of their thousands of

hoofs that had at first warned him of danger, as he was trudging on foot along the weary prairie trail, and at once his eye had fallen upon the solitary tree, standing grim, yet inviting, in the midst of the plain.

"I guess 'twas made to order for just such an occasion," he said, gayly, as he took refuge amid its branches, feeling no concern in such a haven; but one glance over the waste, and he had discovered that the herd of buffaloes, flying at top speed, numbered thousands, and that behind them, only a short distance away, and in full chase, came a band of Indians, fully a hundred in number.

"Whew!" and the scout gave a long whistle, and uttered the words that head this chapter.

"I wish, now I've climbed this tree, that I could pull it up after me," he said, at the same time looking with instinctive caution at his arms. "I've got six shots in my rifle for long range, and twelve in my revolvers for close quarters, and if Bill Cody goes under, he leaves wailing in the redskin camp."

On came the buffaloes, and behind them the savage Sioux, and all were heading directly for the lone tree and its daring but youthful occupant.

"By the Rockies! I've got a thought," he suddenly exclaimed. "The buffaloes are heading directly for our camp, and I'll try it, and if I go in all right, I guess I'll astonish Wild Bill and the boys. If I don't, why they'll astonish the redskins.

"If I stay here the reds will kill me, that's certain, and the chances are against me the other way; so it's 'nip and tuck' either way, but I guess I'll take tuck."

As if having made up his mind to some desperate purpose, he drew his belt more tightly around his waist, made his rifle more secure, pulled his hat down hard on his head, and sat down on the limb upon which he had been standing.

His face was now pale, yet still fearless and determined, and his lips were set firmly, like one who knew he had to grapple with death, and the chances wholly in favor of his antagonist.

Not a hundred yards away came the huge herd of flying buffalo, the earth fairly shaking beneath their thundering hoofs.

Behind them, only a few hundred feet, came the mounted warriors, urging their ponies hard to overtake the game they had started.

With his keen eyes the scout swept the herd over, and his glance fell upon one huge buffalo bull that was heading directly for the tree.

"That's my racer, and I'm thinking he won't need spurs."

As he spoke he swung himself down under the limb, holding by his hands, and, just as the huge buffalo bull dashed beneath him, he let go his hold and dropped astride of his "racer," as he had called the animal.

A wild, startled bellow, a snort, a bound in the air, and the bull led the herd; but Buffalo Bill had not been unseated. He gave a loud, ringing war-whoop, which was heard by the Indians and savagely answered, for at a glance they saw the desperate deed was done to escape them.

A few hundred yards of flight, and the scout felt perfectly at home on the back of his hairy steed, for he was a superb rider, and said, grimly:

"I guess I can try my luck on a redskin now."

As he spoke he unslung his rifle, and, with remark-

able agility sprang to his feet, and balancing himself, turned half around, and fired, and down from his pony to the ground dropped the leading warrior, while a shower of arrows flew over the head of the daring borderman.

He seemed to feel no fear, and again and again his rifle flashed and off to the happy hunting grounds sped the spirit of a savage warrior with each rifle crack.

CHAPTER II.

BACK TO CAMP.

Buffalo Bill was scouting at this time with a man who will go down to history as one of the greatest of border heroes, for it was none other than Wild Bill, though why called Bill, when his name was James B. Hikok, is one of those things which in the mysteries of frontier nomenclatures is past finding out.

Wild Bill was one of the most powerful men on the plains, and was admitted to be the "best man" physically in the employ of Russell, Major & Waddell, who then ran the supply trains to all the important Western ports.

The train, of which Wild Bill was wagon master, had encamped for the night on the South Platte, and was *en route* to Salt Lake with supplies.

Buffalo Bill had been sent by the government to guide the train across the wildest parts of the prairies. He was considered a better guide than a whole detachment of cavalry and a better protection against redskins as well.

On this day he had gone away from the train on a lone scout across the prairie.

The wagon train had encamped for the night, and several of the men were bemoaning the fact that there was a scarcity of game for supper.

Suddenly Wild Bill sprang to his feet and gazed off across the prairie.

"Hello!" he cried. "Here comes game, pards, and right into camp."

All eyes were turned across the prairie, and over a rise came a surging, flying mass of buffaloes, heading almost directly for the camp.

"Turn 'em! turn 'em, boys, or they'll stampede the train!" yelled Wild Bill, and throwing himself upon the back of his own horse that was feeding near, he dashed off to turn the herd, accompanied by two-score of the train men.

Shots and yells at the heads of the flying mass turned the herd aside, so that they would not dash through the camp, and then all eyes became fixed upon one object, or rather two, for mounted upon a huge bull was a human form, riding in splendid style, though the animal he bestrode was dropping slowly back behind the herd, sorely fatigued by the run and the weight he bore.

And behind this novel sight was now visible a band of Indians, urging their horses on at top speed, and, at the same time, sending arrows after the straining buffalo and his daring rider, who ever and anon faced half round and returned the compliment by a shot from his rifle.

A wild yell from the buffalo rider told that he saw his friends and help ahead, and it warned the redskins of danger to them, for with savage whoops of hatred and disappointment they turned quickly to the right about, just as Wild Bill shouted:

"Pards, there comes our scout! Three cheers for Buffalo Bill, the king of the border!"

And with a yell the three cheers were given, while Wild Bill, urging his horse forward toward the still frightened and nobly struggling buffalo bull, cried out:

"Look out, Bill, for you are going by camp, and I'm going to drop him."

"All right, let him have it," came the answer, and Wild Bill reined his horse suddenly back, raised his rifle, and seemingly without aim, fired.

The buffalo gave a mighty bound, as though hard hit, swayed wildly, and after a short run fell dead in his tracks, while Buffalo Bill nimbly caught on his feet.

There was a good supper in camp that night on the buffalo that Wild Bill had killed.

Two days later the scout bade good-by to Wild Bill, in obedience to new dispatches he received at the hand of a pony express rider from headquarters.

These dispatches were in the form of a letter from Gen. Miles, commanding the frontier division of the army, telling the scout that he was to turn eastward, acting as an escort and guide for a party of five miners who were going back East with a wagon load of silver. A place was appointed for meeting the miners, and Cody met them there at the proper time.

The five miners were swarthy, good-looking fellows, well mounted, and there were numerous other members of their party, bringing the total number up to thirteen.

This is considered an unlucky number the world over, and Buffalo Bill could not help thinking of that.

Hank Hayes, the leader of the party, or "Captain," as he was called, was not at all superstitious, however, and the ominous number did not trouble him in the least.

Hank and the four other miners met Cody at the rendezvous and offered to conduct him to the camp of the remainder of the thirteen some miles off.

At a rapid gallop the little party of horsemen rode on, their guide narrowly watching the prairie ahead and his companions as attentively watching him and gaining confidence in his ability as he held an unswerving line for their camp, they having told him the locality where it lay.

A few miles were gone over, when all of a sudden the moon arose above the prairie horizon, and Buffalo Bill drew rein.

"What is it, guide?" asked Hank Hayes.

"I saw some shadows pass between us and the moon, and they were Injuns," was the cool reply.

"What is to be done?"

"Ah, they don't see us, and we can bend to the right and perhaps avoid them; you say your pards are well camped?"

"Yes, they can hold the camp against a hundred redskins."

"Good! then let us on," and swerving to the right obliquely, the guide held on his way for a while, but to again suddenly draw rein.

"Those fellows do see us, for they have changed their course," said the scout.

"How do you know?"

"See 'em," was the short reply.

"You can see more'n we can."

"My eyes are strong; but yours are sharp or ought to be, as you've been searching for dust."

"You bet; we was sharp-eyed enough to strike a rich lead; but I can't see any sign—can you, pards?"

"Nary!"

"Not a shadder."

"The scout's too sharp-eyed fer me."

"I see ther pararer, ther skies, ther moon an' ourselves."

Such were the answers of the miners; but they did not convince Buffalo Bill that he was mistaken, for he cautiously rode forward again, and soon came to another halt and asked:

"Are your horses fast and fresh?"

"Not very; why?" answered the captain.

"Well, my pony is dead beat, and therefore we will have to fight for it," was the cool rejoinder.

"What do you mean?" asked Hank Hayes, now convinced that the scout was assured of pressing danger.

"I mean that a party of Indians were lying in wait for you miners and have now surrounded us."

"What! Do you mean it?"

"I do; they are nearly half a mile from us, but have formed a circle entirely around us, and are moving as we move."

"But we can break through their line."

"We could, perhaps, if all our horses were fresh and swift; but they would at once charge upon us did we attempt it, and now they are closing in their circle."

The miners were now impressed with the danger of their position, for sharp glances around the horizon showed them that the Indians could now be distinctly seen, and, although they were men who had roughed it for years on the border, they felt that their safety lay wholly in the hands of the scout, and to him they turned for advice, and Hank Hayes asked:

"Well, Col. Cody, what's to be done about it?"

"Fight it out!"

"How many Indians are there in the party?"

"About a hundred."

"And we are six; the chances are fearfully against us."

"Oh; we'll never say die! See, they are closing in rapidly and what we do we must do quickly," said the scout.

"But what are we to do, Col. Cody?"

"Fight them right here, and Wild Bill will come to our rescue, as soon as he hears the firing, for I will open first with my repeating rifle, and he knows its voice. His camp is not far distant."

"Well, you is ther doctor, so give yer prescription, an' we'll take ther dose," said one of the miners.

The scout cast another searching glance around the horizon, and then sprang to the ground, at the same time calling upon the miners to do likewise, while he said, reproachfully:

"Kit, old fellow, I hate to, but I must, for it's life or death with us now."

Drawing his knife, he at once cut the throat of his pony, who fell to the ground in a dying condition, while

the miners, grim bordermen that they were, seemed momentarily horrified.

"Quick! down with your horses, for they must be our barricade," cried the guide, and four of the five at once obeyed.

"Why don't you obey?" cried Cody, as the fifth miner stood quietly by the side of his animal.

"You said hosses, par, an' I rides a mule," was the laconic response.

"So much the better for you; his hide is tougher," said the scout, and springing forward he quickly severed the mule's jugular vein, and then, by his advice, the animals were drawn together, so as to form a circular barricade, and then into this the men sprang, and squatted down, their arms ready for use.

In forming this novel breastwork of their horses, which had but a moment before been bearing them over the prairie, a couple of minutes only were consumed, yet in that time the Indians had advanced rapidly, and were now not three hundred yards distant, and charging upon the little party from all sides.

The guide was perfectly cool, and with his repeating rifle across the back of his dead pony, said, quietly:

"Wait until they come within sixty yards before you fire; I will give it to them at twice that distance, and Wild Bill will know my rifle is ringing out for help."

"But will he come?" asked Hank Hayes.

"You bet; Wild Bill never deserted a friend in trouble, or a foe in a fight; here they come, so keep cool and don't throw a shot away."

As Cody spoke he ran his eye along the sights of his rifle, for the moon now shone brightly upon the scene, and the next instant the formidable weapon began to flash forth its shots with a rapidity that was marvelous, and a skill that was deadly, for down went several horses and riders.

"Now let them have it!" cried the scout, and the Mississippi yagers, with which the miners were armed, sent their leaden bullets into the charging redskins, while the guide reloaded his rifle with a cool and rapid hand, and had it ready for use by the time the last of his comrades had fired, and once more it spoke with deadly effect.

Unable to face such a fearful rain of lead, the Indians broke in confusion, and quickly fled out of range, followed by the exultant shouts of the miners.

"Who is hurt?" Buffalo Bill asked as he looked around

upon the little party, upon whom showers of arrows had been sent, the carcasses of the animals catching them.

"Nary one, though some arrers hit ther ole mule, but wouldn't stick, he's so tough; but is ther reds comin' ag'in?" answered the owner of the mule.

"Oh, yes! they'll doubtless charge in force on one side next time, as they see we are too much for them in a line."

"And here they come; steady all!" called out Hank Hayes, and all saw that the Indians were now coming in two columns, and once more the fight began, Buffalo Bill again opening at long range with his repeating rifle.

This time the redskins made a more determined charge, and not until the scout called out to his comrades to drop their rifles and use revolvers were they checked, and then only when the fire of the besieged became most deadly.

"They don't like it a bit," cried the scout, and he again turned to see who had been hurt, saying, pleasantly:

"I got my hair parted with an arrow, but it's all right."

"An' a arrer glanced on ther iron hide o' this durned mule an' cut into my shoulder," growled Dan Beckett.

"Anybody else hurt?" asked Hank Hayes.

"Nary! I guesses they'll let us alone now, durn 'em," returned a miner.

"You don't know Injuns, if you think so, for they'll be more in earnest now and try cunning," was Cody's opinion.

"Cunning ain't goin' ter sarve 'em eny," responded Beckett.

"That we will have to wait and see. Hello! see their little game now," and the scout pointed out upon the prairie to where several dark objects were moving slowly toward the barricade.

"They is creepin' upon us on their hands and knees," said Benton Burke, a miner.

"No, they are shoving their dead ponies before them as they come; see, there are a dozen horses, and about three Injuns behind each, now we have to look out," and Buffalo Bill eagerly gazed upon the dark, moving objects that were slowly but surely drawing nearer the besieged miners.

Presently the repeating rifle flashed and with a wild war-whoop a savage sprang up from behind a pony and fell dead in his tracks, while the scout remarked, quietly:

"He wasn't careful enough, and—but hurrah! bravo!

there's Wild Bill and his boys," and as he spoke loud shouts were heard beyond the Indian line, followed by shots and the sound of hoofstrokes, and into view dashed half a hundred men on horseback, scattering the redskins in wild flight and confusion.

"Buffalo Bill, where are you?" then came in the well-known voice of Wild Bill.

"Here! but don't hurt our dead Injuns," cried the scout, and he bounded out of the barricade, followed by his comrades.

"Six of you, good! Nobody's checks called in? I recognize Buffalo Bill's work there," and Wild Bill pointed to the slain animals.

CHAPTER III.

THE BURIED TREASURE.

It was many weeks after the miners' fight with the Indians that a wagon, drawn by six mules, and followed by thirteen horsemen, was slowly approaching the Solomon River, near the center of what is now the State of Kansas.

A glance at the wagon and team and the costumes of the horsemen would indicate that they had passed through many hardships, for the wheels were bound up with raw-hide ropes, the harness was mended in so many places that it was hard to tell which was the original and which the patches, while the clothing of the men was travel-soiled and much worn.

And yet the faces of the men were cheerful, for their dangers were being left behind them and in a few more weeks they would reach the Mecca of their hopes, and the scout and guide would have run them in safety into Leavenworth.

It was near sunset, and the eyes of all were searching the prairie waste ahead in hopes of seeing a winding stream on which to encamp for the night, for they had been compelled to make a wide detour from the regular train, in order to avoid Indians and road agents, reputed by westward-going trains they had met to be lying in wait for the silver miners returning home.

And this wide circuit had cost them the loss of one of their wagons and half their mules, and so shaken up the other vehicle, with its heavy load, that it was hourly in danger of depositing its precious cargo upon the earth.

"I'm a-prayin' fer two things now, pards, an' t'at is

thet ther ole hearse will hold up on its legs, an' thet we'll not hev to go inter a dry camp to-night."

"Those are my prayers, too, Burke; but I fear they will not be answered in either case," said Carl Moran, a handsome young miner of twenty-five, whose small hands and feet and general appearance indicated that he had been born a gentleman, whatever had been the cause of his becoming a miner in the far West.

"Upon the principle of the prayers of the wicked availing naught, pards, I guess; but I always ask Buffalo Bill here when I want to know anything. How is it, scout—will the hearse hold out, and will we strike a dry camp to-night?" and Hank Hayes turned to the guide, who had brought them safely through all dangers thus far, and who was mounted upon a wary, spirited animal which he had named Little Gray, a horse that Wild Bill had presented him.

"Oh! there's a stream not far ahead I know, from the lay of the land; but as to the old cart holding out, I don't——"

A sudden crashing of timbers interrupted what more he would have said, and with a snap following the crash, the wagon was a wreck, for the fore axle had broken in two, and a wheel had fallen in fragments, and the pole was rent in twain, which startled the mules and caused them to bound forward with a force that jerked the vehicle into a mass which a wheelwright could not have remedied.

"Curse the luck!" and various harder epithets sprang from thirteen lips in chorus, while, unable to repress his humor, Buffalo Bill broke forth in a peal of ringing laughter.

"It's durned funny, ain't it, colonel, ter hev our fortin split heur on ther prarer, an' no help in hundreds o' miles," said Benton Burke, growlingly.

"Oh! there's no need crying over spilt milk, for——"

"But it ain't spilt milk; it are spilt silver."

"Well, there is but one thing to do about it."

"And that is, Col. Cody?" asked Carl Moran.

"To cache it here and then go on to Leavenworth after wagons."

"Lordy, man, we hesn't ther time, for we hes ter git back ter Colorado an' work out our lead, or we might git left," declared Burke.

"All we can do, as Bill says, is to bury the treasure, and we can go with what we can carry, and that will give us a

good time and make our folks comfortable," put in Carl Moran.

"And what then, pard?" inquired Hank Hayes, who was the nominal leader of the party.

"Oh! when we have dug all we can git out of the mines, we can git this on our way back to ther States, for it will keep."

This advice of Carl Moran was about the best that could be followed under the circumstances, and to lose no time they at once set to work placing on the mules all the silver they wished to carry, after which a hole was dug in the prairie, the sod being carefully taken off to replace again, and the dirt deposited upon the wagon tilt.

An hour's work, and the treasure was buried and sodded over carefully, while the extra dirt was wrapped up to throw into the nearest stream.

"Now the wagon," said Buffalo Bill, and the broken vehicle was dragged some distance away and set fire to, after which the scout drew a rough map of the locality and bearings, and the party started once more on their way, the scout walking and driving pegs made from the wheel spokes into the prairie as he went along.

"There goes my last stake, and there's a stream," suddenly cried Buffalo Bill, as in the darkness ahead a line of cottonwoods was discerned, which he knew fringed the banks of a prairie stream.

"I'll go and cut you some stakes, Bill," said Hank Hayes, and then all rode forward, leaving the scout standing by the side of the last peg he had driven into the ground.

In a short while Hank returned, and the stake line was continued to the base of a large cottonwood, upon which a mark was made.

"Now I'll finish the map, and then you can find the treasure with your eyes shut," said Cody, and, by the fire-light, for a cheerful fire was soon burning, he made the necessary diagram complete, and handed it to Carl Moran, saying as he did so:

"If you can strike the trail all right, look me up and I'll find your treasure for you, for there's a fortune in that hole back on the prairie, and it won't do to lose it."

"You are right, it won't do to lose it, for, as you say, there's a fortune there for one man," and a strange, evil glitter came into the eyes of Carl Moran, which Cody detected; but he made no reply, and turned away to look after the comfort of Little Gray, who in spite of the repu-

tation given him for deviltry, was a splendid animal and as faithful to his master as a dog would have been.

An hour more and, after a hearty supper, the miners sought rest, excepting Hank Hayes, whose night it was to stand guard with Buffalo Bill.

But with the first ray of dawn in the east they awoke to continue their journey homeward—no, not all awoke, for there was one who remained quiet, unheeding the jokes of his comrades to arouse him.

"Come, Burke, we will leave you behind if you don't rouse yourself," said Carl Moran, approaching and shaking his comrade.

But no answer came, and Carl Moran started back with a cry upon his lips, and the startling words:

"Great God! boys, he's dead!"

It was too true; the spirit of the miner, from some cause unknown, had taken flight, and he had sunk to sleep forever, while his comrades slumbered peacefully around him; and the alert sentinels on duty had not discovered the approach of the foe that none could elude.

Beneath the shade of the cottonwoods, upon the banks of the limpid stream, Benton Burke found a grave—the first of the doomed thirteen.

CHAPTER IV.

A THREAT AND A DEED

Without further accident the miners reached Leavenworth under the guidance of Buffalo Bill, and the scout started on a trip to a nearby fort.

While at Fort Leavenworth Buffalo Bill had contracted the enmity of one of the hangers on at the place.

Kent King, for such was his name, was certainly a very handsome man, possessed a fine form, and had very winning ways, and was noted as the best shot and rider in that part of the country, and was looked upon as a person whom it would not be safe to arouse.

But Buffalo Bill had heard strange stories of him.

Buffalo Bill returned to Leavenworth some weeks later. He heard on his return that this man, Kent King, was to guide a wagon train back to the far West.

The wagon train was composed of a prominent Westerner, Judge Hale, his pretty daughter and several other citizens.

As Cody's business took him West at that time, he decided that he would travel West with this train himself.

The night before the Hale train, as it was called, was to start for the far West, the scout rode into Leavenworth and sauntered along the streets, nodding pleasantly to those whom he knew, or stopping for a chat with some recently returned silver miner, Californian, bullwhacker or scout, to glean what ideas he could of the latest news from the border.

Of his intention to go with the Hale train he said nothing to any one, but now, meeting several men who had joined the party, he casually asked if they had engaged a guide.

"Yes, Bill, ther jedge seems set on thet velvet-faced card sharp Kent King bein' the pathfinder inter ther wilderness 'o' redskins, an' thar's no 'busin' his mind out o' it; but why he sh'u'd want him, I dunno," answered Bullwhip Ben, the Prince of Bullwhackers, while a long-legged Yankee, whose peculiar forte for striking a bargain under any and all circumstances had gained him the name of "Old Negotiate," put in:

"I guesses he don't know ther Republican from ther Platte, an' ef he don't lead us a thousand miles off ther trail, I'll gi' yer my pony, Bill, if you'll giv' me yourn."

"I think too much of Little Gray, Negotiate, to risk him on the result; but I have heard that King has spent much time upon the border and was once in the border army. Anyhow, there will be somebody along who knows the trail if he don't," averred Cody.

"I'll negotiate my bullwhip agin' yer saddle, Bill, thet he spends more time pourin' honey inter ther ear o' pretty Mary Hale, than he does lookin' fer ther trail, fer he's softy on ther gal, an' they does say as how ther jedge wants 'em ter splice."

Buffalo Bill's face grew dark at this, but he made no reply and passed on to the "Star of the Empire," where the prairie men of all descriptions gathered day and night, to pass the time in conversation, gambling, drinking and any other amusement that suited their humor.

A score of voices greeted Cody on his arrival, for he was universally popular, and as many invitations were given him to:

"Step up an' hev suthin', Bill."

"Moisten yer coppers, pard?"

"Sling tanglefoot, colonel?"

"Come pizen yerself with corn-juice?"

But to all these pressing invitations Cody returned the answer:

"No, thank you, pards, I'm too young a child yet to mix drinks."

"Why, what has yer been drinkin'?" asked one.

"Milk!"

"Oh, you isn't weaned yet?" said a whiskey sot, insolently.

"No, and I don't want to be, if I had to carry a sign like you have on your face."

"What's 'er matter with my face?" and the loafer put his hand caressingly upon his whiskey-tinted visage.

"Yer nose is as red as a beet," cried one.

"He is a beat; a dead beat, and the largest I ever saw cultivated in Kansas soil," responded Buffalo Bill, and in the laugh that followed at the loafer's expense, the scout glided into the large front hall, where he suddenly came upon Kent King, rigged out in a new suit of buckskin, and armed to the teeth.

"Well, King, you go West to-morrow, I hear?" said the scout.

At the sound of his voice Kent King wheeled quickly round.

"Yes, colonel, I wish you could go along, too, as assistant guide.

"Thank you! I intend returning West soon."

Buffalo Bill followed Kent King into a large room, toward which a tide of humanity was setting, for it was the Gamblers' Paradise, as it was called, though Purgatory would have been a more appropriate name for it.

Already had a number of men seated themselves at the tables, at one of which Kent King soon settled himself, and the different games began, Buffalo Bill watching with considerable interest the luck and misfortune of the players, and sauntering from table to table.

Presently, seeing that Kent King was steadily winning, he walked over to another table, around which stood a crowd watching the playing of two men, whose recklessly large stakes had driven other players away.

As he walked up a sudden scene of excitement occurred, and one of the players cried, in an angry tone:

"Pard, you is a durned cheat, an' a keerd sharp are no more'n a thief."

"This to me, curse you!" came in the stern tones of the other man, and the two players were on their feet in an instant, while their hands sought for weapons.

Whether one had suspected trouble or not none knew; but certain it is a revolver appeared with marvelous quick-

ness, the flash and report followed, and across the table dropped one of the players—the one who had accused the other of cheating.

"Who are the stiff? Who knows him?"

"Ain't he no friends fer ter keep the fun movin'?"

"Pard, wasn't yer a leetle too quick on ther draw?"

Such were the remarks that went around, while Buffalo Bill, who had caught sight of the dead man's face, stepped quickly forward, and, turning the body over, looked into the open, staring eyes, now set in death.

"I know him; his name is Dan Beckett, and he was a Colorado miner," announced the scout, and he glanced over to where his murderer stood, and instantly recognized him, for he cried:

"Why, Carl Moran! I thought you were Dan's pard!"

"Ah! Buffalo Bill, is it you?" and with a revolver in his hand, as though expecting to be called to account, Carl Moran stepped toward the youth, who said, firmly:

"No, Moran, I can't take your hand, if, as they say, you shot your pard down without warning."

An angry look came into the face of Carl Moran, but checking it, he said:

"He was my pard, Bill, until of late he has been seeking trouble with me for some cause, and he accused me of cheating, and I couldn't stand that. He died because I pulled the quickest. Come, I'm glad to see you again, and here's dust to bury poor Dan decently," and throwing a small bag of gold onto the table Carl Moran turned away, while Buffalo Bill gave the body of the silver miner to some one who promised it a decent burial, and leaving the Star of the Empire, mounted his horse and rode slowly to the cabin he occupied, murmuring over and over again and evidently with deeper thoughts behind the short utterance:

"Two from thirteen leave eleven."

CHAPTER V.

THE MIDNIGHT MYSTERY.

The Hale emigrant train had been gone several days before Buffalo Bill had started West after it.

One evening, an hour before sunset, when within forty miles of the Republican, Buffalo Bill saw a storm arising and sought shelter in a thicket of cottonwoods, where he quickly erected a "wicky-up," with the aid of the hatchet he always had hanging to his saddle.

Into this shelter Little Gray and his rider found refuge, and when the storm had blown over the evening meal of game, crackers and coffee was enjoyed by the scout as much as though served in a palace.

Rolling himself in his blanket, after giving Little Gray a good length of the lariat to feed by, Buffalo Bill sought sleep, unawed by his loneliness and the danger to which he was exposed.

He was awakened by feeling something warm against his cheek, which he knew was Little Gray.

"There's something up; what is it, old horse?" he said, in a low tone, well knowing that Little Gray was a faithful guardian at night.

Listening a moment, he heard voices in conversation, and hoofstrokes evidently approaching the timber where he had sought shelter.

Instantly he threw his saddle on Little Gray, coiled his lariat and awaited in silence the comers, be they friends or foes.

Reaching the timber, they dismounted, three in number, and prepared to camp; but, though Bill knew by their conversation that they were white men, he dared not make his presence known, for he might run afoul of road agents, horse thieves, or men who would be only too willing to try conclusions with him for Little Gray and his arms.

"This place is hardly large enough for two parties who don't know each other, little horse, so I guess we'll seek other quarters for the balance of the night," said the scout, and he cautiously left the thicket, the faithful animal following closely behind him, and stepping as noiselessly as a deer, seemingly appreciating the danger.

A few hundred yards distant was another thicket, which the scout had noticed, and in this he took refuge and soon made himself as comfortable as the wet leaves and dismal place would admit.

"I wonder if I couldn't bargain with them for my dry wicky-up, Gray. I guess if Old Negotiate was here he could arrange it; but now let us go to sleep, for it's a long ride we have to-morrow," and with an affectionate caress to his horse, Bill again rolled himself in his blankets and sought rest.

How long he slept he knew not, but he was suddenly awakened by two shots fired in quick succession.

Springing to his feet, he glanced in the direction of the

timber where he had first sought refuge, and then came to his ears:

"Hold, pard! yer isn't gone mad to shoot yer friends, has yer—oh."

The last word rang out loud, and the sound was drowned in the crack of a revolver, and then all was still.

"This is worse than cats on a moonlight night, Gray; there's trouble yonder; yet, as it's not our funeral, guess we won't attend," muttered the scout, as he again threw the saddle on Little Gray and awaited new developments.

"Gray, we are losing rest this night, but it can't be helped," and while his horse went on grazing, indifferent as to what had occurred over in the motte near by, Buffalo Bill sat down to await coming events.

Feeling drowsy, he sank to sleep, and only awoke with the dawn.

Then he awaited until sunrise, and seeing no sign of life in the motte, mounted Gray and cautiously approached the thicket.

As he drew nearer he heard a whining, snarling sound that told him that the living had gone, whoever they were, and that the dead remained as the food for wolves.

Dashing into the timber, he scattered the fighting, ravenous animals with a couple of shots and beheld before him a sickening sight.

At his feet, before a fire slowly dying away, lay two bodies, upon which the wolves had already begun their feast, and in the white, bearded faces turned up to him he recognized two of the silver miners he had guided across the plains.

Throwing himself from his horse, he bent over one of them, and cried out, quickly:

"It is Hank Hayes! poor fellow, to die thus; and he was shot twice, so I know that he it was I heard speak last night to the one who killed him. And there stand their horses, but he who did the deed has gone. Poor fellows! The wolves shall not pick your bones, for I will bury you," and the scout set about his sad task, and beneath a tall sycamore the miners found a last resting place, while in the bark of the tree, with his keen knife, Buffalo Bill cut the following inscription:

"HANK HAYES

AND

BUCK GRANGER,

SILVER MINERS OF COLORADO.

Killed by a treacherous pard.

FOUR FROM THIRTEEN LEAVE NINE."

CHAPTER VI.

A SECRET AND A MYSTERY.

The night following the tragedy in the motte, as Buffalo Bill was riding slowly along, the two horses of the murdered miners following him, he suddenly sighted ahead the glow of camp-fires, and soon after rode into camp, where he was welcomed with a general shout of rejoicing, for all who did not know the scout had heard of his many daring exploits.

"Well, Cody, what news do you bring?" asked Judge Hale, as he greeted the scout.

"Nothing of importance happened at Leavenworth before I left, but I found two dead men in a motte back on the trail, and their murderer has escaped; but here are their horses. Have you had anybody join the train, sir?"

"Not since we left; but come up to my layout, for Mary will be glad to see you, and you will find there your old friend King, who, you know, is our guide."

Buffalo Bill nodded assent and followed the judge, an honest-faced man of fifty-five, to his tent, before which sat Mary Hale and Kent King, watching a negress prepare supper, which was certainly most tempting, consisting as it did of coffee, buffalo steaks, wild turkey, potatoes and corn cakes.

Kent King's face flushed as the scout appeared, and for that matter so did Mary Hale's, but with far different motives.

The maiden, however, who was a handsome girl of eighteen, warmly extended her hand in greeting, and said with marked emphasis:

"Colonel, I am so glad you have come! you will remain, of course?"

"Of course he will, for I feel he has decided to become assistant guide to the train, eh, Buff'ler?" broke in Kent King.

"I am bound West to rejoin my old pard, Wild Bill, and his boys; but if I can be of service I will gladly lend a hand, a rifle, or a revolver."

"How many people have you?"

"Ninety—all told, with twenty-three fighting men; then we have twenty wagons, two ambulances and my carriage, which make up a respectable show to scare off prowling bands of Indians or outlaws."

"And you are heading along the Republican to Arickaree, I suppose, sir?"

"I have the trail I intend to follow already laid out, Scout Cody," answered King, with a slight show of anger; but the scout answered, coolly:

"That may be, but as it has certainly been some time since you were West, and there are localities now to be avoided, and I know them, I would like to make them known to you."

"When at fault I will call on you, Cody; but this train has come prepared for every emergency that might arise, I can assure you, and I shall not lead it into danger."

"Come, Susan says supper is ready, and I am almost starved; come, father, Mr. King and Buffalo," said Mary Hale, breaking in upon what she thought was tending toward trouble, for the day the train departed she had received a letter from Buffalo Bill warning her against the man who was to be their guide, and she felt, therefore, that there could be no friendship between the two.

"And you'll join the mess, Cody?" said the judge.

"Thank you, sir, but I guess I'd better pard in with some of the boys."

"No; you are my guest, and you can pay your board by keeping us in game."

"All right, judge," returned the scout, and the four sat down to supper, which they ate with a relish which only life on the prairie can give.

That night Mary Hale, when the judge and Kent King had gone on a circuit around the camp, said suddenly to the scout, who sat near her gazing into the log fire:

"Col. Cody, have you cause to doubt Kent King?"

"Yes."

"Tell me why you suspect Kent King."

"I don't suspect him; I know him to be a rascal."

After a moment of silence, Mary Hale said:

"I am confident that father and Kent King have met before—that is before they met on the border, for I overheard a conversation between them once, and, I regret to say it, but I believe there is a secret between them, and one which my father would not have known, and hence the power held over him."

"It must be very serious, Mary, for your father to be forced to give you to a man he does not like; but, with this to work on, I will keep my eye on Kent King, and, if you do not love him, you shall not marry him; if you do, I've got nothing to say."

"Oh, how good you are! Now I feel brave, as you are

my friend, and with the train; but before this I have all along had a presentiment of coming evil."

"Don't borrow trouble, Mary. Now good-night, for I will take a little circuit around camp, as we are getting into a neighborhood where we must keep our eyes open," and shouldering his rifle, Buffalo Bill took his departure from the camp-fire, and passing out through the line walked in the direction of a small thicket, a short distance away.

Suddenly he came upon two persons, one of whom he recognized as Kent King, and, believing the other to be the judge, he approached them.

That he surprised the guide was evident, and his companion he did not know, and Cody felt certain that Kent King was playing some game of deviltry, with the train as a foundation to work upon.

Steadily westward the train held on its way from sunrise to sunset, and around the camp-fires at night gathered the settlers, indulging in songs and pleasant chats, until fatigued nature urged them to seek repose for the early morning start.

From the day of his coming Buffalo Bill had been invaluable, for he was the life of the company, the elder people admiring him greatly, and the younger ones having him for their beau-ideal of a hero.

A skilled hunter, he kept every mess supplied with game of all kinds, and his services as a guide Kent King soon found to be indispensable, and though holding on a given course he allowed the scout to select the routes for each day.

Though apparently with nothing to trouble him, Cody was all the time watching the gambler closely, and the more he saw of him the more he was convinced that there was something wrong brewing, and this suspicion was held by pretty Mary Hale, and the two talked the matter over of how often the guide left the train on a pretended hunt, but always returned without success, and then the many secret interviews which he and the judge held together.

One afternoon, when the train had halted rather earlier than usual on the banks of a pleasant stream, Kent King sought the "layout" of the judge and called to Mary, who was in her tent.

"Well, Mr. King, how can I serve you?" she asked, quietly.

"Sit down, Mary, for I have something to say to you,"

and he placed a camp-chair for her, while he remained standing.

"Mary, you know that your father has promised you to me for a wife?"

"Yes, as well as I know that I was not consulted in the matter, Mr. King."

"Consult now your heart, Mary, and give me my answer," he said, earnestly.

"I have but one answer, sir; I would never marry a man I did not love."

He started, and turning his handsome eyes upon her said, with deep feeling:

"And you do not love me, Mary?"

"I do not."

"You will change."

"No."

"You must do so, for you are to be my wife," he said, firmly.

"Ha! do you intend to force me to give my hand where my heart cannot go with it?"

"Yes, if you will not willingly become my wife you must unwillingly be made such."

"Never! you are insulting, Kent King, and I will speak to my father of your insolence," she said, haughtily.

But the man only smiled, and after a moment said:

"Your father will side with me, Miss Hale."

"And will he so far forget his self-respect and love for his only child as to make me marry a man I now—yes, I will say it—fairly detest?"

"Ha! ha! ha! my beauty! Your detestation may as well turn to admiration, for your father and myself have agreed that you are to be Mrs. Kent King, and that right soon, as Parson Miller is willing to marry use whenever I say the word."

"Parson Miller I have never liked, sir; but, as a man of God, he cannot lend himself to crime."

"Oh, no; he will simply marry a wayward girl, at her father's request, to a man who loves her devotedly, and will make her a good husband."

"But I will cry out against this crime being done; to all in the train I will beg for aid."

"Bah! your father's will is supreme here, girl, and no one will gainsay what he wishes done, and they will merely look upon your protestations as maidenly caprice."

"Oh, Heaven have mercy! Is there no one I can call

upon?" cried the now thoroughly frightened and wretched girl.

"You can while Buffalo Bill's around, Mary," and the scout stepped from behind the tent, and with his rifle lying across his arm, as if by accident, but pointing straight at Kent King.

"Oh, Mr. Cody! my father and all have deserted me," cried Mary, springing toward him.

"I'm around yet, Mary," so don't get blue," was the cool remark of the scout, as he confronted the guide.

"Leave here, or I'll make this camp too hot for you!" fairly shouted Kent King.

"I like it hot, Kent King, so set your fire a-going."

"Oh! here comes father!" said Mary. "Now, Kent King, I'll see if you have spoken the truth, when you say he will force me to marry you against my will," and she sprang toward the judge, who just then approached, and continued, earnestly:

"Father, this man says that I am to marry him; have you so told him?"

Judge Hale certainly looked deeply worried, for his face was pale and his brow clouded; but after glancing at the guide he said, in a low tone:

"Mr. King loves you, Mary, and he is certainly a man that you cannot but admire——"

"I hate him—fear him—loathe him!"

"Tut, tut, my child, you are silly."

"I am sensible. Oh, father! why is it you wish to sacrifice me to that evil man?"

"Miss Hale is complimentary," sneered the guide.

"She knows you," coolly said Buffalo Bill.

"Is it a sacrifice for a young girl to marry a man of means, a gentleman and one who has done much for her father, and loves her devotedly?" interposed the judge, evidently with a painful effort.

"He is a gambler, an adventurer, and no gentleman would force a girl to be his wife."

"Don't use dictionary terms, Mary; he's a blackleg, a blackguard and a black-hearted scamp," added Buffalo Bill, bringing his rifle closer to the guide's heart.

"You and I shall have a settlement, scout, which you won't like."

"Oh, I like settlements; it's when people won't settle that bothers me."

"I have given my promise, and my daughter must obey me, for I owe Mr. King more than I can ever repay,"

and the face of Judge Hale flushed as though from shame at some bygone recollection.

"Ah! I'm to be sacrificed, father, to square your debt of gratitude to Mr. King, for some service he has rendered you," remarked Mary, with biting sarcasm.

"The judge is right. In the past—for we have known each other for years—it was in my power to save him from trouble, and he appreciates it, and, knowing my character, has promised me his daughter's hand, and I now say that in one week she is to be my wife. Am I right, judge?" and Kent King turned a look upon the judge that seemed to force from his lips the word of reply:

"Yes."

"Enough! now we understand each other, Mary; and you, sir, shall leave this train with the rise of the sun, and if you show your face in it again while on the march you shall be shot down as would be an outlaw or an Indian," and the guide turned two burning eyes upon Buffalo Bill, who answered, in the most provoking impudence:

"Is that so, Gambler King?"

"Try it, and you'll find out."

"You are such a liar, King, I'll put you to the test; but let me tell you, whether I go or stay, the night you make Mary Hale your wife, I'll make her a widow before the 'joined together' and 'put asunder' are cold on the parson's lips," and shouldering his rifle Buffalo Bill strode away from the spot, directing his steps in the direction of the other camp-fires.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PLOTTERS.

When Buffalo Bill walked in among the camp-fires, around which the emigrants were busy preparing their evening meal, he beckoned to Old Negotiate, who had joined the train as teamster, to follow him, and the two soon stood together in the shadow of a clump of box-elder bushes.

"Negotiate, old man, there's trouble in camp," remarked Buffalo Bill.

"I'm bettin' a chaw o' terbaccy, Bill, ag'in yer rifle, thar is ef you say so."

"I do say so; and more, that Kent King is at the bottom of it."

"I'll negotiate liberal bets on thet, Bill."

"He intends to force Mary Hale to marry him."

"Not ag'in her will, Bill; or I'll bet my bull-whip ag'in his scalp he don't do it, ef I'm 'round."

"I knew you would say so, old man; but he says that Parson Miller will marry them one week from to-day."

"Waal, he c'u'd do it prime ef any one c'u'd, fer he's a gospil sharp from Sharpville, an' he's hot on Scriptur'."

"But he must not do the job."

"Waal, ef you says not, scout, I'm bettin' my pipe ag'in his Bible he don't."

"I do say so, old man."

"You wouldn't have a row with ther parson, Bill, or you'd lose yer chance o' heavin when the Dealer above calls in yer chips fer cashin'."

"I don't want a row with the parson, though I don't like him, as I think he is all preach and no practice; but I'll give him a call to the mourner's bench if he attempts to aid in wronging Mary."

"It's bad luck, Bill, to kill a cat, cuss a preacher, or strike a woman."

"When a minister or a woman forgets who and what they are they forfeit respect."

"And ther cat, Bill?"

"Choke the cat!"

"So I say, Bill; but I'll negotiate yer mother's ole brindle tabby ag'in your pony thet ther parson does as Kent King tells him."

"So I believe, and I wish you to help me prevent it."

"But how kin we, Bill?"

"Ah! I have it. King has ordered me from camp, and if I return he says he will kill me."

"Waal thet is interestin, chief scout."

"Now at dawn I intend to go, and as Parson Miller is very fond of hunting——"

"Yas, he's ther best hunter I ever see, but he don't never find no game."

"Well, I'll show him where there's game, for I want you to ask the parson to go on a day's hunt with you; then drop back a few miles, and I will join you——"

"I hopes yer isn't goin' ter call in his chips, Bill."

"No, I'm no assassin, old man; but I'll join you and will propose a wide circuit with the parson, while you are to go in another direction and meet us at a given point; but don't you meet us."

"Waal."

"Strike for the train and report the parson lost."

"Waal, Bill! talk clear, fer I is as dumb as a mule."

"I'll get lost, too, and it will take us more than a week to find the train——"

"Aha! Oh, Bill, you is a boss scout; I sees, I sees now; without a parson ther can't be no splicin' in matrimony."

"You are right; we will run across some herders going south after cattle, and I know them all, and will get them to join the train with me, and then Kent King will continue on a trip with them, and I'll guide the party on to Denver."

"An' ther jedge?"

"Oh! he'll be glad to get rid of King, I feel certain, though, for some reason, he dare not say so; now, old man, go back to camp, and remember the hunt with the parson to-morrow."

"I'll be thar, fer I'll chin him to-night, an' I'll lie so about game he'll pray fer mornin' ter come; oh, Lordy, Bill, what a good man you'll hev ter be, while ther parson is with yer, fer yer'll hev grace over tough buff'ler steaks that'll make 'em tender, an' yer'll hev ter say yer leetle

'Now I lay mes'

every night; Bill, Bill, I fear you'll yet tarn Gospil sharp yerself."

"I'll not be a deceitful one if I do. Now good-night," and Buffalo Bill separated from Old Negotiate, and making a circuit again reached camp, inwardly rejoicing over his plot to capture a parson and prevent a wedding.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOST AND FOUND.

True to his promise, Old Negotiate sought Parson Miller—a long-legged, cadaverous-faced individual with a look as if ice cream would not melt in his mouth, and told him he was going on a hunt the following morning, adding:

"Now, my Pard o' Piety, ef you'd like ter kill a buff'ler as is a buff'ler, you jist go with me in ther mornin', an' I'll bet yer ther buff'ler yer kill ag'in yer horse, thet we'll bring back more game then we kin carry."

"Brother Negotiate, for not knowing the Christian name given thee by thy sponsors in baptism, I must call thee by that which thou art known in this howling wilderness, I will be more than glad to go hunting in the morning,

though it seemeth wrong to slay the innocent buffalo and feathered fowl, to cater to our appetites," answered the parson, with a pious roll of his eyes.

"Yer'd be a durned fool ef yer didn't eat, parson; but we'll start early, so chin yer pra'ers durin' the night so as not ter lose time."

And so it was arranged that the parson and Old Negotiate should start at an early hour on a hunt, and they were up with the dawn and ready as the train pulled out for the day's march.

But somehow the promised luck did not come to them, and it was with real pleasure, after several hours of hard riding, the parson suddenly cried:

"Why, there is our scout brother, William Frederick Cody."

"It's ther chief o' scouts, or I are a liar, pard—I mean parson; I think he rode out o' camp last night, fer he hed a few words with Kent King, I heerd."

"He seemeth a brother of too high mettle; now Brother King is——"

"A durned fool an' a rascal," put in Negotiate, bluntly, and the parson rolled his eyes in holy horror, and said, in his drawling tones:

"He appeareth to me like a man of reason and piety, and I rejoiceth that he is to marry a damsel like our sweet Sister Mary."

Old Negotiate muttered something like an oath, and which was not at all complimentary to the parson, and then cried aloud as Buffalo Bill came nearer, Little Gray being in an easy gallop:

"Hello, Bill! You is the man we want, for we can't find no game, though ther parson hes prayed diligent fer a buff'lo or jack-rabbit ter spring up."

"You are off the trail, old pard, and don't hunt right," declared Bill, giving Little Gray a jerk for being viciously disposed toward the parson's mule, and which caused Old Negotiate to innocently say:

"Now look at thet thar horse; he knows like a human, parson, thet you an' yer mule ain't the same breed as ther rest o' us, seein' as you is a gospil-grinder, an' yer animile is nuther a horse or a mule; but, scout, how w'u'd yer do ef yer wanted game?"

"Ah! then thou knowest where the wild beasts of the field and birds of the air lurketh and haveth their lair, my brother?"

"I do, parson, and if you will go with me and let Old

Negotiate bear away to the left, we'll find all the game you can shoot."

"I are willin', chief, an' ef we don't meet on the trail ahead, we will in camp; don't let ther parson git hurt, or ye'll hev no one ter bury yer when yer is called in; but I'll bet yer ther game I slays agin' what yer does that I gets ther most," and Old Negotiate waved his hand and started off to the southwest, while Buffalo Bill and the parson bore away in a northwesterly direction, the latter charmed to be hunting with a scout whom he knew always brought in game.

A ride of a few miles and the keen eyes of the scout sighted a herd of buffalo ahead, and instantly he gave chase, followed by Parson Miller on his mule, which was certainly a very fine animal and remarkably swift of foot.

It was a long run after the herd, but after a while the parson was elated beyond measure by bringing down a buffalo bull with his old musket, a relic of the war of 1812, that kicked the shooter off his mule when he discharged it, causing him to utter something strangely like an oath as he struck *terra firma*, the scout thought.

To hide his laughter from the unfortunate parson, Buffalo Bill set off in chase of the mule, and soon skillfully lassoed him and returned him to his owner, remarking, quietly:

"The gun kicks as hard as the mule, parson."

"Trifle not, rash one, with the heels of Goliath."

"You bet I don't, parson, nor with your old blunderbuss, either; but you got your buffalo."

"I did," and the parson surveyed the dead animal, and at the same time rubbed his shoulder, little dreaming that some of the bad boys in camp had thrown into the musket a few extra loads when they knew its sanctimonious owner was going on a hunt.

Having cut off some of the choicest parts of the buffalo, the two mounted and started off in what the parson supposed was the direction of the trail; but soon a band of elk were sighted, and Cody skillfully brought down one at long range, and it furnished a supply of juicy meat that the preacher devoured with hungry eyes.

A couple of turkeys, found in the bottom land of a small creek, and a prairie chicken killed by Cody with his revolver, satisfied the parson with the day's sport, and again he urged starting for the train, as night was coming on, and with it a storm.

But darkness came on rapidly, and, seeing that they

would be caught by the storm, Cody urged that they seek refuge in a piece of timber land, which his companion reluctantly consented to do, and in a short time the scout had thrown up a comparatively comfortable wicky-up and built a blazing fire.

"Well, parson, we are in for it all night," announced Buffalo Bill, gayly, as, having lariatied Little Gray and Goliath out to feed on the juicy grass, he was seated in the wicky-up cooking their supper, the parson looking dolefully on.

"It seemeth so, my friend, but thy skill hath made a famous retreat for us, and the scent of these viands our hunters' craft hath provided will not make it unpleasant, unless the redmen of the forest should come upon us un-awares like a wolf in the night."

"Oh, Little Gray is as good as a watchdog and can smell an Injun half a mile; besides they'll lie low a night like this; but come, parson, here is a buffalo steak for you, and just see how this turkey is cooked, so pitch in, for the smell of this coffee makes me hungry."

The parson needed no second invitation, but quickly said grace and "pitched in" with a gusto that would have driven a dyspeptic mad with envy.

By the time the supper was finished the storm broke in fury upon them, driving Little Gray and Goliath, who had made friends, to the lee of the wicky-up for shelter, and causing the parson and the scout to wrap themselves snugly in their blankets and seek rest.

With the dawn they awoke, ate breakfast and started, as the parson supposed, for the train, but really going far from it, as Buffalo Bill was determined to prevent the marriage of Mary Hale to Kent King; but when night again overtook them and no white tilts came in view the man grew gloomy and once more they went into camp.

And thus it continued for a week, when one afternoon they sighted afar off a line of "prairie schooners," and the parson gave a loud shout of joy, while Bill's face became clouded and he muttered:

"Can Kent King have changed his course? No, it is impossible for them to be 'way up here, and that is another train."

And upon overtaking the wagons they found them to belong to Russell, Major & Waddell's train bound to Fort Laramie with supplies, and in them were many hunters, teamsters and bullwhackers who knew Buffalo Bill

well, and he was greeted with a ringing shout as he rode up.

"Got yer whip, my boss bullwhacker, fer yer kin git a job right here?"

"Mr. Simpson, the parson and myself will keep company with you for a day or two," said Cody to the train boss.

"As long as yer please, Bill," and he added in a low tone, "what in the name o' thunder is yer running double with a gospil sharp fer? Parson, yer say? Waal, he looks as cheerful as a corpse at a wake; but ef he's your friend, pard, I'm as glad ter see him as though I'd run a nail in my foot, an' ef he'll sling us a leetle gospil ter-night, with a Psalm throwed in, we'll pass round ther hat fer him, as ther Doxology biz ain't as good as bull-whackin'."

Buffalo Bill laughed, as he asked:

"Any news, Mr. Simpson, from Kansas City?"

"Nary news, an' we've come along quiet, 'ceptin' ther killin' o' two fellers who j'ined us, an' was goin' out with our bull train, until they struck somethin' bound fer Denver, whar they was goin' to minin' ag'in, for they'd struck it rich in silver, an' hed been East on a rackit ter see ther old folks; and now, as I live, they said you hed run 'em through on ther trail east."

"Well, where are they?" asked Cody, quickly, and with some excitement.

"Passed in, Bill."

"Dead?"

"They be, indeed!"

"And their names, Mr. Simpson?"

"Lordy, how am I ter know, man? They comed at grub time when yer called 'em Ned Oaks an' Jack Cole, but they might be knowed under other handles when at home."

"And how did they die?" asked the scout, in a low tone.

"Kilt; one was shot on guard one night by some sneak-in' Injuns, and t'other follered soon arter."

"Did you see the Injuns?"

"We seen one hoverin' around fer a day or two afore he got his work in."

"Anybody else in the train killed?"

"Nary! an' it were hard on ther two pards."

"Yes, hard indeed," responded the scout, while to himself he added:

"Ned Oaks and Jack Cole gone, too! Well, that makes six of the thirteen dead."

CHAPTER IX.

THE TEXAS HERDERS.

"Injuns! Injuns!"

"No, they is road agents!"

"You are all wrong, boys; they are herders, for I recognize Prairie Pete."

The last speaker was Buffalo Bill, and the others were members of the wagon train, or bull outfit, as it was usually called, which the scout and the parson had joined some days before, the latter contented to be out of danger, but discontented at being forced to remain away from the Kent King party.

The train had just gone into camp for the night, when over a divide far away appeared a band of horsemen, at the head of whom Bill Cody recognized an old man whose constant avoidance of the settlements and continued life on the plains had gained for him the name of Prairie Pete, which was sometimes varied to Prairie Pilot, as he was always on hand to guide trains when at fault, and knew the country from Leavenworth to the Rocky Mountains as well as he did his own little ranch on the Republican.

As he came nearer, riding a wiry mustang that showed both good staying qualities and speed, it was noticed that he was dressed in buckskin, was as brown as an Indian, possessed a face upon which beard would not grow, and had iron-gray hair that fell below his shoulders.

His eyes were black, piercing and never quiet, and his small but tough frame was never still, while he had a habit of keeping his hand constantly toying with the hilt of a large revolver he wore on his right hip, and it was a bad habit which had frequently served him a good turn.

Behind this specimen of the real prairie man rode about thirty dashing, wild-looking fellows, all superbly mounted and attired in a suit half Mexican, half buckskin and wearing in their belts three large revolvers and a knife, and carrying no rifles, if I except one or two of the party.

They were a band of Texas herders or cowboys, returning home after driving a large herd of cattle to the rancheros of the North, and Prairie Pete was their guide.

They were superb riders, carried a revolver in each boot, besides those in their belts, wore sombreros encircled by gold cords and with the "lone star" embroidered on the rim, and at close quarters were a terror to meet, and were avoided, rather than sought after, by Indians.

Their horses were as fleet as the wind, and trained to perfection, while their riders could throw a lasso with marvelous dexterity, and shoot better with a revolver than could most men with a rifle.

Their leader was a *distingué* young man of twenty-five, with dark blue eyes and long lashes that a woman would have been proud of, and the form of an Adonis, but with marvelous strength, a nerve of iron and the courage of a lion.

"Hello, Prairie Pete, how are you?" cried Buffalo Bill, stepping forward and greeting the old man, who threw himself from his horse, and, grasping the scout's hand, cried:

"Ding dong my cats, Bill, I'm as glad ter see yer as though I'd cotched ther measles! Put it thar, pard, for you is ther dog-durndest, ding-dongedst, con——"

"Don't swear, Pete, for there's a parson along," warned Cody, with a sly wink.

"Suff'rin' Moses! A parson, a reg'lar out-an-out grinder o' a gospil mill, Bill?" demanded the old man in a whisper.

"Yes, a perfect stunner to pray, and——"

"Bill, one o' our boys hes been hooked by a steer, an' another hes been kicked by a mule, an' they suffers on-marciful; hes yer parson anything in his book o' pra'er to suit them cases?"

"Oh, he can pray from creation to judgment, Pete; but come, let me introduce you to Lew Simpson, the train boss, and——"

"Hold on! Let me incherdoose you to ther cattle boys. I is guidin' southward, an' they is terrors clean through, but as fine a set as sun ever shone on."

"I think I have met Buffalo Bill before, two seasons ago, when he was bullwhacking with Wild Bill Hikok on the Platte," and the handsome leader of the cowboys stepped forward.

"Yes, Capt. Dash, I was in Cheyenne when you killed the two gamblers when they bounced you for exposing their cheating an old traveler."

"Ah, yes, I recall the affair now, and how you kept their pard from killing me with a shot in the back. Grasp

hands, Bill, and you'll find the grip of Dash, of Texas, is square to friend or foe; but why are you here, Bill?"

"I got lost with the parson there, and run on Simpson's train."

"You got lost, Bill? What fer?" asked Prairie Pete.

Buffalo Bill gave the old man a wink to keep quiet, and then turned and introduced the newcomers to Simpson and the parson, who just then came up.

The herders were, of course, made welcome, and that night around the camp-fire they made the evening fly away with their merry songs and side-splitting stories, to all of which the parson listened with holy horror in his face but laughter in his heart.

As there was a possibility of the herders crossing the southern trail, followed by the Hale train, at about the time they would meet, Buffalo Bill, after a talk with Prairie Pete and Capt. Dash, decided that he and the parson would accompany them on their way.

Accordingly, the party set forth at sunrise the following morning, Prairie Pete selecting Parson Miller as his special pard, and Buffalo Bill riding with the young Texas leader.

CHAPTER X.

A SURPRISE.

The non-appearance of Parson Miller, when evening came and the train had gone into camp, caused some apprehension, when it was found, through Old Negotiate's return, that he had gone with Buffalo Bill, the news of the scout's leaving having leaked out.

As for Kent King, he was savage upon the subject, and two whole days the train was camped, while horsemen scoured the country in the search of the missing parson and scout.

As the storm has obliterated their trail the hunt had to be given up, and the train continued on its way, Kent King morose and savage in humor at the ruse cleverly played upon him.

Though he had questioned Old Negotiate closely, that innocent worthy could give him no satisfaction regarding the affair; but to Mary he made known the truth, and she thanked Buffalo Bill in her heart for this proof of his true friendship.

And thus the week given her as a limit passed away, and even the judge seemed to rejoice in the absence of

the parson, but to soothe the guide's feelings promised him that Mary should marry him as soon as they reached Denver.

Thus ten days passed away, and one evening the train pulled into one of the most delightful camping grounds they had struck on the whole march, and it was decided to pause there for a few days to rest the people and the cattle, and to patch up the harness and mend wagons.

The first day of rest was a busy one in camp; but the second one a grand hunt was organized, on which both Kent King and the judge went for the sport, as game was plentiful.

Toward the afternoon Mary Hale, who was seated on the edge of the timber, gazing dreamily out over the prairie, sighted a band of horsemen coming, and instantly reported it to Old Negotiate, who was near.

"It are ther boss scout, miss; it are him fer a fact; if it ain't, I gi'n yer my bullwhip fer yer watch an' chain."

"Do you mean it is Buffalo Bill?"

"Yas, miss, it's Bill, an' he isn't alone, nuther."

"No, so I see. Oh! I recognize him now, and there is the parson, too, and one, two, three, yes thirty-one horsemen with them."

"Yas, miss, they is herders from Texas, an' they is a gay lot; full o' fun, full o' fight when r'iled, an' hes hearts as big as Texas steers. I guesses ther scout hes got 'em ter come inter camp with him, fer ter see ef Kent King are willin' ter keep his promise ter kill him."

"Oh! no, no, for there will be trouble," cried Mary, turning pale with dread of coming evil.

"Guess not, miss, ef yer wants ter save a row, jist knock a man down; them is wisdom words, miss, fer, yer see, some fellers talks fearful, but don't fight, an' ther men thet means biz from ther jump saves trouble an' heaps o' tongue-lashin', as yer must remember, leetle gal, ef yer wants ter go through life quiet."

"They are a dashing looking set of men," declared Mary, admiringly.

"Yes, miss, it are Capt. Dash an' his Texas Herders, as I see now."

"I have heard of him as a very daring and handsome man."

"He are both; he'll fight fer a Chinee heathen, miss, or ther under dog in a rumpus, an' they do say as he gives all his 'onest 'arnin's at keerds ter poor hunters an' boys as is sick, while he'll tackle a buzz saw ef it insulted him."

"He's a snake fer out-Injunin' Injuns, kin cut ther ashes off a cigar with his revolver, throws a knife ter dead center, kin lasso the tail o' a wasp an' jerk out ther sting, without hurtin' ther bizziness end o' ther reptile, an' is a reglar screamer from Screamersville."

"He certainly is a marvelous man, Negotiate; but who is it that is riding with the parson?"

"That man are a character, miss; he's Prairie Pete o' ther plains; tough as hickory, old as Methuselim, an' a trailer as kin find a coyote track in ther trail o' a herd o' cattle. Oh, I'll negotiate he could strike ther parson's trail in a sarmon an' foller him clean through from Genesis ter Revelation."

Mary laughed at the words of Old Negotiate, as she answered:

"Well, we will soon know what is to happen, for Buffalo Bill has not come back without a motive."

"No, miss; ef 'sociatin' with ther parson hasn't made him tenderfooted in ther heart, ther will be music in ther air, an' I'll negotiate thet——"

"Hello, old man," called out Buffalo Bill, suddenly riding up, with Capt. Dash by his side.

"I are here, Billy."

"So I see; and Miss Mary, too! In spite of being exiled, Mary, I have come back, and with me my friend, Capt. Dash, of the Texas Herders."

Mary Hale glanced into the dark-blue eyes of the Texan and bowed low, after which she nodded coldly to the parson, who said in dismal tones:

"I am glad to return to the train, Miss Hale, for my brother lost us on the wild prairies, and we are footsore and weary."

"You hes been ridin', not walkin', parson, an' I don't see what made yer feet sore," put in Old Negotiate, while the maiden invited Buffalo Bill and Capt. Dash to her camp as guests, and the others were led away to have their comfort looked after by the parson and the teamster.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GUIDE AND THE HERDER.

When Mary and her two guests, Cody and Capt. Dash, reached the romantic spot selected by the maiden as a camping ground, they seated themselves before the tent, when into the timber dashed Kent King, followed by

Judge Hale, while afar off were heard the shouts of the returning hunters, who had been most successful.

At a glance Kent King saw Buffalo Bill had disregarded his threat and orders, and his face grew dark with rage as he threw himself from his horse and, not noticing the Texan, cried, angrily, as he advanced upon the scout:

"You here, sir! By Heaven, you shall rue it."

Buffalo Bill laughed in an ironical, irritating way, but made no effort to draw a weapon, and, unheeding the cry of the judge to let the scout alone, the guide had stretched forth his hand to seize him by the throat, when his arm was grasped as though in an iron vise, and a revolver muzzle was pressed against his temple, as, in a stern, commanding tone, Capt. Dash said:

"Hold! if you want a quarrel, try me on!"

Kent King was a man of great physical strength, a dead shot, and one who was generally feared; but in the clutch of the Texan he felt that he had met his master, and he turned his glaring eyes upon him and asked, savagely:

"And who the devil are you, sir?"

"Capt. Dash, of Texas, and talking sound sense, Kenton Kingsland."

"Ha! you know me, then?" and a look of pallor spread over the face of the guide.

"As well as you will one day know Dudley Dashwood," was the quiet reply; but it brought to the guide's lips the words:

"Good God! and you are Dudley Dashwood?"

"I am, and well met at last with one whom I have a wrong to avenge."

"Ho! judge, boys, ho! here, all of you!" suddenly cried Kent King, in ringing tones, and answering cries came from different parts of the camp.

With a light laugh, Capt. Dash said:

"Mr. Cody, will you clip this wolf's claws?"

"Now, sir, stand there until the help you have called arrives," and he hurled the guide from him, as Buffalo Bill drew his weapons from his belt.

"Fool! do you think because two of you have disarmed me there are not friends near?" hissed Kent King.

"I have pards near, too," and putting his hands to his lips the Texan gave a piercing, prolonged battle-cry that brought forth thirty ringing echoes from different parts of the timber, and at once running men appeared coming toward the scene.

"Oh, father! how will all this end?" cried Mary, now thoroughly alarmed; and, hearing her words, the Texan answered, pleasantly:

"Oh, do not fear, Miss Hale, for there will be no trouble."

A moment after four-score men were on the spot, and instinctively they had ranged themselves in two lines, the train men facing the Texans, and all with their hands resting upon their weapons.

"So, sir, you have come into my camp with your band of outlaws to carry things as you please?" cried Kent King, addressing Capt. Dash, and at the same time falling back toward his own line.

"I was invited here, and would not abuse hospitality, had you not attempted to kill my pard, Bill Cody; but as you have begun the affair I will end it, and I make no idle threats, Kenton Kingsland."

There was something in the manner and words of the Texan that caused the thinking men of the train to feel that the affair was only a quarrel between the guide and Capt. Dash, and they cared not to mix in, especially as the determined, almost indifferent bearing of the herders showed that they would be the ugliest of antagonists in a fight.

"I will have you hurled out of my camp, you accursed Texas bravo," exclaimed the guide, savagely; and the parson, who had previously sided with the Texans, at this bold assertion, crossed over to the train men.

"You will do no such thing, for did you fire on me, my boys, you well know, would not let you and your backers live one minute."

The parson at once crossed back to the Texans.

"Men, this man is a Texas outlaw! Come, let us kill him and his band!" shouted Kent King, and a few of the reckless spirits, as the train men were in excess of the Texans, made a movement as though to follow their guide's lead, and the parson, to be on the safe side under all circumstances, now immediately recrossed to the train line.

"Hold! men, we want no bloodshed here, nor will I have any. That man I have good cause of quarrel against, and if he is not a coward he will meet me, and save all trouble; if not, I will give him a trip to Texas, where he is wanted just now," announced Capt. Dash.

"You is chinnin' sacred music, pard, for we doesn't want

no trouble, with wimmin and children around; ther Texans an' us hes no call fer a row," put in Old Negotiate.

"We doesn't want none, nuther; speak up, parson, an' pour ile on ther troubled waters. Oh, Lordy! I has rid so long with ther gospel sharp I kin jist sling Scripture like a deacon!" assured Prairie Pete, while Judge Hale stepped forward and in his quiet way remarked:

"My friends, it is our duty to uphold our guide, unless, as is usual upon the border here, he accepts the challenge of this Texan."

"I accept no challenge to fight the bravo, and I will give him and his band of cutthroats just five minutes to leave this camp," cried Kent King, gaining courage, as he saw that there was a desire to sustain him, and to save himself he cared not how many others were sacrificed.

Before Capt. Dash could reply Buffalo Bill stepped between the two lines and said, pleasantly:

"Pards, let me settle this trouble, for I think I can. That man, Kent King——"

"Hold! do not listen to his lies, for I——"

"Let us hear Buffalo Bill, Mr. King; then you kin hev your say," interrupted a teamster, firmly, and there were a number of voices that called out:

"Talk it out, chief!"

"Let us hear the king of scouts!"

"Thank you, pards! Well, Kent King once got into a quarrel with me, and, knowing what he was, I overtook him on the road and we had a talk together, and then I started to ride away, when he turned and fired upon me—here's the scar—and falling from my horse stunned, he believed me dead and rode away."

"Ah! ther cussed wolf!" said Prairie Pete.

"He is worse, for he would now force Mary Hale to marry him, and her father, for some reason, dare not refuse; but to prevent it, I got the parson lost——"

A burst of laughter here interrupted Buffalo Bill, while Parson Miller scowled daggers at him, now knowing how cleverly he had been taken in.

"As soon as I got good backers I returned to camp, determined to prevent the marriage of Mary to Kent King, and I tell you frankly his life will be the forfeit if he carries on his high hand here, for this is Capt. Dash, of Texas, of whom you have all heard."

That the words of Buffalo Bill had made a deep impression on the train men was evident, for Mary Hale was beloved by all, and a low murmur against Kent King

ran through the crowd, which was suddenly checked, as Capt. Dash leveled a revolver at the guide and said, sternly:

"Move one inch, Kenton Kingsland, and I will kill you."

The guide glared upon him, but he loved life, and knew his life would be the forfeit if he stirred, while he said in a tone not wholly firm:

"Men, will you put up with this outrage to your guide?"

"They must! Were you worth fighting for, as true men they would uphold you; but, as it is, you are my prisoner and shall go with me to Texas."

"Judge Hale, do you utter no protest?" cried Kent King, now feeling that he was entrapped and fearing, from some cause, to return to Texas.

"What can I say, King?" almost whined the judge, who was as pale as death.

"Coward! I will expose you at any rate," and raising his voice he said in a loud tone:

"Men, this coward here who will not aid me now, was once——"

But a form suddenly dashed forward, and with a telling blow full in the face Buffalo Bill felled the guide to the ground.

All were startled by the sudden act, and Capt. Dash said, sternly:

"Hold! Bill! This man was my prisoner."

"I care not; he shall not out of mean revenge make known the secret of his power over Judge Hale," was the spirited response.

"You are right, Bill; he shall not," answered Capt. Dash.

"Yas, the chief o' scouts is right."

"He's a daisy on wheels."

"Bully for Buffalo Bill, the boss scout!" and other cries arose, while Judge Hale gave the youth a look of gratitude he never forgot.

"Brazos Bob, try your fancy knots on a lariat around this gentleman, and for fear he may tell a lie, and thereby fail to emulate the immortal father of his country, gag him," commanded Capt. Dash, and a tall Texan stepped forward and quickly bound and gagged the now thoroughly subdued guide, in whose favor only the parson now raised a faint remonstrance, which Old Negotiate cut short by the warning remark:

"Better not let them Texas devils hear yer, parson,

or yer'll go on a journey with 'em, an' they might lose yer in ther Staked Plains."

"Heaven forbid!"

"I'll negotiate my ole coon-skin cap agin' yer scalp they will."

"Verily, my brother, thou art Job's comforter; but I'll say no more, for the wicked should be punished, and it may be a dispensation of Providence that the guide is thus nipped off in the noonday of youth; yea, verily."

The sudden capture of the guide cast a restraint and also a gloom over the encampment, though Kent King had never been liked in the train.

Feeling this moody humor, the Texans, in their light-hearted way, got around the camp-fires, and, with their really fine voices raised in merry song, drove away the blues from all except Kent King, who lay bound in a tent with Brazos Bob keeping guard over him.

At the camp of the judge were gathered Mary, Capt. Dash and Buffalo Bill, and the Texan was entertaining the maiden with some thrilling stories of the wild life. he led.

"Kent King, sir; may I ask your intention regarding him?" queried the judge in a tremulous tone of the captain of the Texas herders.

"Oh! I'll take him to Texas and be guided by circumstances as to what I will do with him."

"You will not kill him?" eagerly asked the judge.

"That depends upon whether I turn him over to the authorities there, who want him for crimes he has committed, and which will hang him; but good-night."

"No, captain, before you go sing for Miss Mary my favorite song. Here is her guitar, and I know you play," pleaded Buffalo Bill, taking up the instrument and handing it to the Texan, while Mary urged:

"Yes, captain; please do!"

Running his fingers with the skill of a master over the strings, the Texan broke forth into a song, one of Moore's melodies:

"Believe me if all those endearing young charms,
Which I gaze on so fondly to-day;
Were to fade by to-morrow and fleet in my arms,
Like fairy gifts fading away—
Thou wouldst still be adored, as this moment thou art,
Let thy loveliness fade as it will;
And around the dear ruin, each wish of my heart,
Would entwine itself fervently still."

His clear, pathetic tenor voice arose on the air in sweet-

est melody. Every sound in the encampment was hushed, while grim men and wearied women breathlessly listened.

"Another verse! please," pleaded Mary, and so he continued to the end of the beautiful poem, and, with a pleasant "good-night," arose and strode away, accompanied by Buffalo Bill.

But the spell he left behind him remained unbroken, and down deep in the heart of Mary Hale sank the first, strong love of her womanhood, and she dropped to sleep that night with the name of the handsome Texan upon her lips.

CHAPTER XII.

A CONFESSION AND A SECRET OVERHEARD.

The night in the train encampment passed slowly away, especially to the prisoner, who could only conjecture what his fate might be, now that he was in the hands of a man whom he had bitterly wronged in the past—yes, bitterly wronged indeed, for, a wolf in lamb's clothing, he had won the love of Dudley Dashwood's sister to in the end cruelly desert her and drive her to take her own life.

Returning home after a long absence, Capt. Dash, as he was known in Texas to the herders, had sworn vengeance against Kenton Kingsland, and long wished to meet him, and at last fate had thrown him across his path.

With the dawn of day the camp began to wake up, and soon all was bustle and work, for the train was to pull out that morning to go once more on the march westward, while the Texas Herders were to keep on their way southward.

By invitation of the judge Capt. Dash breakfasted at the headquarters, as Judge Hale's camp was called, as did also Buffalo Bill, and the Texan thought he never saw a more beautiful girl than looked Mary in her dark blue riding habit and slouch hat, which she had donned, intending to pass the day in the saddle, as was often her wont.

After breakfast the judge and the chief of scouts went among the wagons to superintend their getting off, leaving the Texan alone with Mary.

For a moment neither spoke, and then the maiden said:

"Do you ever expect to visit Denver, Capt. Dash?"

Instantly he faced toward her, and answered in his frank way:

"That depends wholly upon you, Miss Hale."

"Upon me?" and she arched her eyebrows in surprise.

"Yes, for I know of nothing else to call me to the vicinity of Denver, but to visit you. I am a frank man, Miss Hale, and it doesn't take me long to love or hate any one, and I'm honest enough to confess to you that you have wrapped yourself so entirely around my heart that your face will ever be before me.

"I know not whether I am making this confession to one already mortgaged to another, and I care not, but certain it is that I am coming to Denver one day to ask you to be my wife, and, be your answer yes or no, you'll ever find Dudley Dashwood your friend."

He held out his hand as he spoke, and unhesitatingly she placed hers in it, as she answered, softly:

"Come to Colorado to see us."

"I will. Good-by, and don't feel anxious on the trail, for Col. Cody is a man in a thousand and will pull the train through all right."

He pressed the hand again, said good-by, and started for the tent where Kent King lay a prisoner.

As he approached he heard the voice of Judge Hale say, pleadingly:

"I certainly did all that I could, Kenton, but I was powerless, and I beg you not to add more grief to my sorrows and tell of my past act."

Capt. Dash frowned; he scorned to be eavesdropper, and coughed so as to give warning of his approach; but neither the judge nor the prisoner seemed to hear it, and then came Kent King's reply in a determined, triumphant tone:

"Ay, Judge Hale, I will tell all of your wickedness—tell how you were left the sole guardian of my wealth, and, because my high temper caused me to take life and be sent to prison for it, you squandered in speculation my fortune——"

"I believed I could double it, Kenton."

"Bah! you may say so, but I believe you spent it in riotous living, old man——"

"No, no, Kenton, I——"

"Keep silent and hear me! When at last I escaped from prison and you read of it, expecting a visit from me, you fled with Mary to this wild border, forgetting that, as an escaped convict, here would be the most likely place for me to come.

"No, no! Andrew Hale, had you kept faith with me re-

garding Mary, she would now have been my wife; but as you did not I will denounce you——”

“Save yourself the trouble, Kenton Kingsland, for I know the power you hold over this old man, and if you breathe one word of the secret to any one, I swear, by Heaven! I will tie you to the back of a horse and turn him adrift upon the prairie for the wolves to run down and feed upon your dainty flesh,” and in the opening of the tent stood Capt. Dash, the Texan.

At his words Kent King turned pallid as a corpse, and Judge Hale trembled, but, allowing no reply, the Texan called out to one of his men to bring the guide's horse, and a moment after, with burning eyes, white face and set teeth, the prisoner was in his saddle, his feet bound securely on each side to the iron rings in the horse-hair girth.

Placing a bugle to his lips, Capt. Dash blew a call for his men, and soon after the herders wound out of camp, their leader at their head, and Kent King riding by his side, while Mary Hale and her father stood gazing after them, with strangely different emotions filling their breasts, for the judge said half aloud:

“He overheard the secret against me, and treated me most kindly; he is a noble fellow.”

And Mary's thoughts were:

“Well, he falls in love like a Mexican; but I hope he won't fall out as quickly, for, if I keep on admiring him for a year in the same ratio I have in a night, I'll be what the train men call dead gone. Ah, me, I hope all will come right in the end!”

Ten minutes after she was heading the train with Buffalo Bill by her side.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEATH LIST INCREASES.

Several days after the parting of the Herders with the Hale train, Buffalo Bill was riding a couple of miles in advance, looking for a good camping ground for the night, when he espied a motte in the distance, and running from it on either side a line of cottonwoods that told him that a stream was near.

Toward this he headed, and riding into the cool shade of the timber he was suddenly surprised and considerably startled by a ringing laugh.

It was not a joyous laugh, but one that seemed almost

demoniacal, and it came from the thicker growth of timber bordering the banks of a limpid stream.

Cautiously he approached the spot from whence came the sound, even Little Gray impressed by the strange laughter, and the scout half tempted to believe it came from some supernatural source.

Nearer and nearer he drew, the laughter now ringing wildly out, and then dying away into low moans, and presently, through an opening in the trees, he beheld a human form, and then another and another.

Two men lay prone upon the ground, and it was evident from their upturned faces that they were dead; but the third was in a sitting posture, and was gazing out upon the stream, while his hands were clasped about his head.

And upon the air floated an offensive odor that the guide knew arose from the decaying flesh, and his eyes became riveted upon a semicircle of hideous beasts, gaunt, hungry wolves, kept at bay by that living human being, though they whined and sharpened their white fangs, preparatory for the feast they patiently waited for, and which they knew must soon come.

And as the scout looked again arose that wild laughter that sent a chill to his heart, and then came words from the parched lips of the man who gazed upon the ravening wolves:

“Oho, ye red-mouthed tearers of human flesh, you are feasting with your eyes now; but you will not have long to wait ere your fangs gnaw my bones. Cowards! why don't you spring upon me and tear the life out of me, for I long to die, for, oh, God! how I suffer!”

“Ha ha! ha! how you fear me; how brave I must be that my look keeps you at bay.”

Buffalo Bill could stand no more, and rode forward into the opening, his coming scattering the wolves in all directions and bringing from the man the pleading cry:

“Oh, you have come at last! you will kill me, won't you, and end my agony?”

Throwing himself from his saddle the scout approached the man and gazed into his face, to start back with a cry:

“Good God! you are Hugh Farley!”

“Yes, what there is left of me; but who are you that calls me by name?” and the sunken eyes were turned upon the guide with a vacant stare.

“I am Buffalo Bill; don't you remember—I guided you, and Hank Hayes, and Benson Burke and others, thirteen of you in all, across to Leavenworth?”

"Yes, we had silver, oh! so much silver! I know you now, Bill, for you told us how to bury the silver, and you will soon bury me."

"No, no, you will soon be all right! Come, tell me what is the matter, pard?"

"I am hungry."

His tone was so plaintive that it brought tears to the brave scout's eyes.

"Oh! don't mind that, for I have plenty to eat, and my train will soon be along and you will be well cared for. Now tell me what else ails you?"

"He shot me, Bill; wasn't it cruel?"

"Shot you! who shot you, pard?"

"He did! see; one bullet broke my leg, and another hit me here on the head, and he thought I was dead like poor Tim Mayo and Prindall there, whom the wolves want so bad."

"By the Rockies! Hugh Farley, you say true, for there certainly lie Mayo and Prindall," cried Bill, recognizing now in the bloated, death-blackened faces two more of the silver miners' band.

"I'll bury them, pard, so the wolves can't get them, and——"

"If the wolves are as hungry as I am, Bill, let them have them," was the plaintive reply.

"No, no, they deserve a better fate, Hugh. Cheer up, old man, for the train will soon be along, and then you shall have plenty to eat, and be well cared for. Now eat this piece of bread, and tell me who killed your friends and shot you?"

"Sh——! I dare not tell, for he would kill me, too, and I don't want to die, now I have seen you, Bill; I want to get well to go back to my old home in Delaware, and carry plenty of silver to make my parents happy in their old age, and, Bill, I want to live to—to—kill him."

Seemingly overpowered with his emotions, he grew black in the face, and Bill expected him to die then; but he rallied and said:

"Pard, I have been here by my two dead friends for three days and nights—oh! such long and dreary nights, and I have suffered, oh, so much, for see, my leg is broken."

"I see it, poor fellow!" said the scout, a glance at the fearful wound showing him that the leg must go, and that the chances of saving his life were doubtful.

"We were going back to the mines, Bill; Tim, Prindall

and myself, and were taking our chances, having missed the other boys at Leavenworth, some having gone back with the trains, and others not having arrived; well, Bill, we camped here, and suddenly he came upon us, and we were so glad; but, oh, God! Bill, he is here now! look, there he stands!"

Buffalo Bill wheeled quickly, his revolver in hand, but nothing was in sight, other than the dead, the skulking wolves, Little Gray feeding near and the wounded man.

"No, he is not there, pard," he said, kindly.

"He is there, Bill, so don't let him kill me! see! he is creeping up to kill you, too! Quick! Oh, quick! for the love of God!"

With a wild shriek the poor crazed man struggled to his feet, bearing his weight upon his shattered leg, and then, with a groan of anguish, he sank upon the ground.

Kneeling by his side, Buffalo Bill tried to revive him, but the minutes flew by, and cracking whips and shouting of the teamsters sounded louder and louder as the train drew nearer and nearer its camping place, but still Hugh Farley remained unconscious, and with each breath his pulse grew weaker until at last the heart-throbs ceased forever, just as the wolves, recognizing at sight of the train that they would be driven from their feast, set up a long, dismal howl in chorus and scampered away out of sight.

"Poor Hugh! What a sad fate you and Tim and Prindall have met! Three more added to the death list, leaving four more of the thirteen.

"Are all doomed, I wonder?" and the scout turned to greet the judge and Mary, who just then rode up and gazed in horror upon the sad *tableau*.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SILVER STAR MINERS.

Without a serious accident and in good time, the Hale train pulled into Denver one afternoon, and after a rest of a day, still under the guidance of Buffalo Bill, headed for the place of settlement, already selected by the emigrants.

Having seen the party encamped on their own ground, and bidden farewell to the judge and Mary, whom he promised to visit again some day, Buffalo Bill set out for Denver, where he passed several days making certain in-

quiries, as though about to set forth upon some trail with an important object in view.

Having gained what information he desired, the fearless scout set off alone for the mines, and not long after sought shelter in a shanty of considerable pretensions, which by courtesy and a vast stretch of imagination was called the Palace Hotel.

When not on the trail Buffalo Bill consulted his comfort, and seeing that he had the "dust" to pay for the palatial (?) accommodations, the landlord gave him a ten by eight room, of course on the ground floor, there being no second story.

The furniture of this den consisted of a bed without sheets, a crippled chair and a bootjack, and there were several bullet holes in the door, suggestive of the thought that some unfortunate former occupant had been besieged there, perhaps for his board bill, and mayhap a vigilance committee who wanted him to emigrate for the country's good.

Not finding his quarters enticing in the daylight, Buffalo Bill sauntered into the office, which also did duty as a social hall, barroom and, as was often the case, dueling ground.

Here, in listening to the conversation of the miners there assembled, the scout learned of a serious accident that had that morning occurred in the Silver Star Mine, which was the property of a dozen or more diggers who had "struck it rich" some years before.

"I tell yer, pards," said a heavily-bearded miner, "Carl Moran has struck it rich sure, fer thar ain't another one o' ther gang out heur now."

"Was all kilt?" said another.

"All but Moran, fer they was workin' down in ther shaft when ther rock broke loose an' fell in, while he'd come out ter git some feed, an' they was about ter foller."

"How many was thar, pard, you say?" asked a miner who had just come in.

"Dave Perry, Dead-Eye Dan, an' Tony Parker—all prime fellers, too."

"Then Carl Moran has got the mine all to himself?" asked Buffalo Bill, stepping forward.

"He hes fer a Bible fact; but it's about played now, as ther dust is all dug out; but what they has in partnership, Carl has charge of, an' I guesses he'll start East now, fer it's enough ter make him han'some rich. Does yer know him, stranger?"

"Yes, and all the others, too, who were in partnership with him. Where is the Silver Star Mine, for I would like to go there?"

"Moran isn't thar, fer ther sight o' his dead pards sickened him, an' he's up at ther Miner's Hotel, whar he boards, an' he's feelin' awful bad, an' I don't wonder, poor feller, when he see ther big rock at ther top o' ther shaft fall in on ther boys."

Buffalo Bill heard no more, but wended his way to the Silver Star Mine, finding it by following the crowd flowing in a steady stream of humanity toward the scene of disaster.

There, lying upon the rocks, were the three mangled forms, which had been extricated from the shaft; but with a glance at the dead Buffalo Bill walked to the mine and closely examined the rock from which the piece had broken which went crashing down upon the toilers below.

"That rock has been undermined until it took but a slight blow to break it loose. Well, there lie three more of the thirteen; I wish I could have arrived sooner to warn them of their danger. Now but one remains, and he, too, is doomed."

Returning to his hotel, Buffalo Bill "kept dark" for the rest of the day; in fact, for the remaining three days he remained in the mines.

Still, by adroit questioning, and keeping his eyes and ears open, he seemed to have gained some important information, for he left the mines early one bright morning, evidently determined upon his future course.

CHAPTER XV.

TRACKED.

"Boys, I guess I'll drop back with my wagon this morning for a while, but I'll catch you by camping time."

"What's in the wind now, pard?"

"Oh! a year ago I *cached* a little dust in this neighborhood, as my wagon broke down, and I thought I'd dig it up now, as I've got enough to keep me from conting West again."

"Some of the boys will help you if you want them."

"No, I'll do it myself, thank you."

"Keep your eyes open for Injuns."

"There are not any around, I guess."

The speakers were Carl Moran, whom the reader has before met, and the last of the thirteen miners, and Al Haines, the captain of the silver train going East.

The scene was the small stream upon which the miners had camped the night after the breaking down of their wagons.

As the train pulled out of camp and disappeared over

the divide, Carl Moran remained behind with his six-mule team and large wagon, already containing a goodly fortune in silver.

When he saw the last wagon tilt out of sight he sprang into his saddle, on one of the wheel-mules, and drove downstream for a mile, when he came to a halt, and took from his pocket a piece of paper.

"Yes, this is the tree, and so many paces due west I'll find the first stake," he said, with a triumphant smile in his evil face.

Driving on, his quick eye soon caught sight of the stake for which he searched, and which was only a couple of inches above the ground.

From there on he followed the stakes until he went over a rise into a place where the prairie became almost a shallow valley.

"Ha! ha! ha! here is the spot, and beneath my feet lies the treasure for which I have so deeply dyed my hands in blood.

"See, it has sunken, as will a grave when the coffin rots, or earth settles; but I'll soon have the precious metal in my wagon, and then ho for the East, where I can live like a prince."

Backing his wagon up to the spot, he sprang to the ground, and taking his spade began his work, which to his sordid nature was a delightful task.

What mattered it to him that the sweat dropped in beads from his brow, and large blisters came upon his hands with his hard work?

He was digging for wealth, and, as many a man before him, minded not the pain and fatigue.

At last his spade struck something that gave a metallic ring; it was the iron hooping encircling a box of silver, and soon the treasure was revealed, and one by one the boxes were torn from their resting place, and put into the wagon.

"A splendid two hours' work; now to overtake the train, for it would seem a just judgment upon me, if the Injuns were to capture me," and he cast a suspicious glance around him, but saw no danger in sight.

"Up, mules, up! You have a double load to draw now."

The strong animals gave a tug at the traces, but ere the wheels turned a dark form suddenly glided around the wagon, and with a cry of horror, as though he had seen a spirit, Carl Moran beheld before him one he well knew.

"Hold! Carl Moran, I have the drop on you."

"Why, Buffalo Bill, is it you? I am more than glad to see you."

"You lie! you would rather see the devil than one who knows all your deeds of crime to gain the treasure we buried here."

"Scout, what do you mean? This is my treasure, so

be careful," warned the man, savagely, but not daring to move, as the scout's rifle pointed at his heart.

"One-thirteenth of it, yes; but the other twelve-thirteenths, Carl Moran; where are the owners?"

"It is all mine, for I bought out the interests of all, excepting the one you saw force me to kill him in Leavenworth."

"You lie! He was not your first victim. Your first lies in a grave not far away, and you poisoned him, I now believe."

"Your second victim you killed over a game cards; your third and fourth you started West with, and cowardly shot in their sleep one night; your fifth and sixth you played Indian and killed, when they stood guard in a western-bound train; your seventh, eighth and ninth you cowardly murdered, for they expected no harm from a friend, as they believed you, and poor Hugh Farley, whom I found drugged and crazed, dared not tell who had done the deed; but I knew, Carl Moran, as I know also that your tenth, eleventh and twelfth victims were crushed to death by the rock your devilish ingenuity undermined and hurled down the shaft of the mine upon them.

"Now, with a fortune, their fortune, in your wagon, you have come here and dug up the balance, that you might revel in the luxuries and ease it will bring you. But I say no, a thousand times no, Carl Moran!"

"In the fiend's name, what mean you? Because you hold me in your power would you rob me?"

"Oh, no; death shall rob you."

The man was now white with fear, and cried in trembling tones:

"Would you kill me?"

"As I would a snake, Carl Moran; but let me tell you it is not to rob you of your treasure; oh, no. See! On this paper are the names of your twelve victims. When your guide, I found out their real names and where they lived, and this treasure goes to their heirs; whoever they may be, to be divided equally."

"And mine?" gasped the man.

"You have often said you had no near kindred, and lucky for them you have not, as they wouldn't own you, so your share goes to the common pot to be divided."

"By Heaven! you shall not rob me of my wealth if I die for it," cried the man, with sudden boldness.

"Oh, you'll die for it, I can swear, for I have tracked you to kill you. Some twenty miles back, since you crossed the Platte, one of Russell, Major & Waddell's bull outfits have been following your silver train, and I have been dogging you since you left Denver."

"To kill me?"

"Your head is level on that subject, pard; I intend to take you back to the bull outfit, and when I tell you that

Wild Bill is the boss of it, and I have already told him of your killing game, you may know that you'll be hanged as soon as the train reaches a tree to string you up to."

"Scout, I'll give you half of this treasure if you'll let me go free."

"It isn't yours to give, you accursed assassin."

"Then take it all, and let me go!"

"Nary! I've got it all now, and you, too. Come! dismount, and let me tie you, for I'll drive the team."

"Great God! is that Wild Bill?"

Instinctively Buffalo Bill turned his head, and, caught off his guard, Carl Moran threw himself from the saddle right upon him, knocking his rifle from his grasp, both going down to the ground together, and clutching in the desperate struggle, which both knew was for life or death.

CHAPTER XVI.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

Driven to frenzy, Carl Moran grasped Buffalo Bill in his powerful arms, for he was a man of great physical strength, and endeavored to draw his knife.

But the scout was as wiry as a serpent, while he possessed wonderful powers of endurance, and his antagonist soon felt that if he gained the victory, it would by no means be an easy one, and he used every effort to free his hands from the grip of his foe, so that he could use either his knife or pistol.

But, with a tenacity and strength that was equal to Moran's, the scout held on, and though they struggled fiercely, rolling over and over, neither could gain the mastery of the other, or the slightest advantage.

When Carl Moran had made his spring from the saddle, Buffalo Bill had turned just in time to catch his wrists in his grip of iron, and after that he knew it resolved itself into a matter of endurance, for if his grasp failed first, his foe would be able to use his knife or pistol, while, if the man first gave out, then the boy could get hold of a weapon and end the struggle.

"Curse you, scout, we are on even terms, now; and do you know what I'll do with you?"

"Shut up, Moran, for I've no wind to lose now answering conundrums," was the plucky reply.

"I'll cut it short soon."

"I doubt it."

"We'll see, you young imp of Satan!" and once more there was a fierce struggle for the mastery, but Buffalo Bill, though underneath, still held his grip.

But gradually his muscles began to feel the terrible strain, and he felt that the man must conquer, yet determined to hold out to the last.

And weaker and weaker he grew, until he began to

count the seconds he had to live, for he did not doubt for an instant but that the man would kill him.

"Ah, youngster, you are failing fast."

"Not yet, you devil," and as the scout spoke, he suddenly gave a long, loud call.

In an instant the sound of coming hoofs was heard, and a shout broke from the boy's lips as a horse dashed over the rise.

"Come! Little Gray, come, and save me!" he shouted.

"Good God!"

The cry broke from the man's lips now, and the next instant he gave a shriek of pain and terror, for Little Gray, seeing the danger of his young master, rushed up with savage fury and seized the shoulders of the man in his sharp teeth, dragging him backward, and ere he let go his vicious hold, the keen blade of Buffalo Bill's knife sank to the hilt in the heart of Carl Moran.

"Curse you! you have conquered," came from the pallid lips.

"You are mistaken, Carl Moran; Little Gray has conquered," was the reply of the panting scout, as he threw his arms around the neck of the noble horse, and said, caressingly:

"Gray, old boy, you have saved my life."

The faithful animal seemed to understand fully the service he had rendered, and rubbed his nose against his master's cheek with a low neigh of pleasure.

A moment after the scout turned toward the man whom he had slain, and the glassy eyes met his own; but they were fixed in death, for Carl Moran, the last of the Doomed Thirteen, had met his fate.

Throwing the body into the hole from whence the treasure had been taken, Buffalo Bill hastily filled it up, and, mounting the saddle mule, and calling to Little Gray to follow, he drove off due west, and at as rapid gait as was possible with the heavy wagon.

A drive of fifteen miles, and the while tilts of a wagon train came in sight, and half an hour after Wild Bill had heard the strange story of his pard.

True to his promise to himself, Buffalo Bill wrote to the kindred of the twelve men whom Carl Moran had slain, and told them the story of the miner's death, as the reader already knows it, and placed to their credit the share due them out of treasure. Thus ended the Silver Trail of the Doomed Thirteen.

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 118, will contain "Buffalo Bill's Ride for Life; or, A Hard-Won Victory."

This is a history of one of the most thrilling wars ever fought against the Indians. Buffalo Bill was made a prisoner more than once, buried alive, and challenged to a duel by an Apache chief.

CURIOUS DREAMS



The contest is whirling along merrily.
Warm days, vacation days, are those for dreams.
Then, in the fall, come the prizes.
How welcome the footballs will be then!
For full particulars of the contest, see page 31.

A Submarine Exploration.

(By Horace Wolcott, Weatherford, Okla.)

Reading the curious dreams in the Buffalo Bill Weekly recalled to my mind a rather "dreamish" incident that occurred to me one night while I was visiting in Florida.

My friend lived on the shores of the Kissimmee Lake, and one evening we had gone for a boat ride. That night, after having partaken of a very heavy supper, we repaired to our room, where we decided to spend an hour reading before retiring.

I had with me one of Jules Verne's novels, and we agreed that I should read aloud from it, which was "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea." Finally we retired and I was not long in dreaming that I was to take a trip in a submarine ship, which seemed to be anchored in the lake close by.

It seemed to be but a few minutes' walk until I fancied myself on board this ship, but to my surprise, I thought I was the only person on board the vessel. Making my way to the engine-room, I began a study of the complicated electrical machinery. I had about given up all hopes of being able to set my ship in motion, when, chancing to glance upward, I saw a series of printed directions for starting, sinking and raising the craft. I thought I pulled a lever and the vessel glided out across the lake. Pulling another lever seemed to cause the boat to sink. I allowed the ship to sink until she nearly rested on the bottom of the lake.

In the full glare of the electric light I thought I could see numerous denizens of the deep. But what attracted my attention most was a house away in the distance.

Feeling a natural curiosity to know the nature of this submarine dwelling, I directed the course of my vessel thither. Arriving nearer I could see that the house was a magnificent structure and palatial in design. Stopping

my ship and disembarking, I made my way to the entrance of the mansion, determined on knowing who or what inhabited this marvelous abode.

I ascended a wide flight of massive golden steps. Noticing a large silver bell, with a sparkling diamond push-button, I pressed the latter. My call was answered by a lovely maid, who slid back a wicket, inquiring who I was. I thought I tendered her my card, which seemed to read, "Paul Smythe, Commander of the *Pearl of the Waters*." The maid took my card, and opening the door requested me to follow her. As the door was opened I saw she seemed to be a mermaid. She led the way to a room that was luxuriously furnished, the like of which I had never seen before, or ever expect to see. Every precious stone and mineral was represented in some way.

My reverie was interrupted by hearing a voice beside me, and, turning, I beheld the fairest vision of loveliness it had ever been my good fortune to behold. I thought I explained the cause of my visit as being purely accidental, adding that I was not aware of the existence of the palace I was then in.

The lady who had interrupted my musings—who was also a mermaid—then told me that the house was the Queen's Castle and that she was the queen of the mermaids. I arose to go, but she detained me by asking if I would dine with her. Replying in the affirmative, she then led the way to a magnificent dining-room, where we partook of a bountiful repast. Dinner over, we went into the conservatory, where the rarest and loveliest of orchids seemed to flourish. After that we went into the music-room, where the queen entertained me with the sweetest of music rendered on most mysterious instruments.

I then thought I asked her majesty if she would do me the honor of accompanying me in my ship on a tour of the lake. She replied that she should be pleased to do

so, whereupon we entered the ship and were soon sailing about. Presently the queen seemed to utter a cry and pointed to the northwest, where a storm seemed to be bearing down on us. I applied all the power at command to drive the ship before the storm, but to no avail, and, with a mighty roar, the blast struck the ship. A mighty crash ensued, and then—I awoke!

When I regained possession of my senses I looked about me and saw, to my horror, that I was in a boat out on the lake!

By the light of the glorious moon I could see the shore not far distant. My dream returned to me with distinctness and I knew I had arisen and dressed and took a boat and had gone for a sail on the lake during my sleep.

Fortunately the oars were in the boat, and I lost no time in rowing back to my friend's home.

A Dream of Luck.

(By Peter Konierski, Chicago, Ill.)

I dreamed that I was going along a place where there were a whole lot of mountains. As I came to the top I saw Buffalo Bill. Six Indians had him tied by the hands and feet and were going to kill him. I ran down and took Bill's gun, killed the Indians and untied Buffalo Bill. Then he took me to his camp and gave me \$500 for saving his life. But soon after I was so glad that I had the \$500 that I woke up and didn't have a cent.

A Hold Up.

(By John Zepp, Jr., Green Island, N. Y.)

I will relate my dream. I was going with a telegraph dispatch when I saw two men near, right in front, stop in the shadow and talk. I didn't think much of it at the time, but just as I got pretty close to them, one said: "You have got a dispatch with you?" I said: "Yes, sir." "Well," he said, "we want it, and want it quick!"

I asked him what his name was, and he told me. The name was all right. I asked him where he lived, but that was not right, and I told him I would not give him the dispatch.

"Well," he said, "we'll take it away from you." And so they tried to, but I put one out in the road. After holding out for about fifteen minutes, I hit the other and landed him in the road. I got along with the dispatch all right. But the next morning when I woke up I found my brother with his ear cut open, where I had hit him when I had taken him for the man. The cut on my brother's ear is true, but the rest is a dream.

A Tremendous Bass.

(By Howard Munson, Milford, Conn.)

I belong to a brass band that has been organized in this town. It was Monday night that we met, and as to-night was Monday I prepared to go down to the room where we met. It was not quite time to go, so I sat down and thought I would wait for my friend, the bass player. I finally fell asleep and I dreamed I was just starting out of doors when a noise like thunder came to my ears. I turned and saw a large cannon aimed at me, with a line

of red-coated soldiers drawn up in back of it. The captain said, "Load! Aim! Fire!" An explosion that seemed to lift me off my feet followed. Then something whistled close to my head. I awoke and found my friend, the bass player, ready to blow in my ears for the third time. I got up and we had a rough-and-tumble fight. Then we got up and started for the bandroom. The whistling noise I heard, I afterward learned, was an apple thrown by my sister.

A Great Misfortune.

(By Henry Zerbola, South Norwalk, Conn.)

I dreamed that I was searching for an island full of gold. After searching for a long time I found it. I got all the gold my raft could hold and started to leave the island, when I was stopped by the king, whom I shot with my popgun. But when I was about two miles off shore a large sea serpent capsize my raft. Everything on the raft fell into the water. I suddenly awoke and was glad to find that I was in bed.

A Fight With a Bear.

(By Charles Crowley, Indianapolis, Ind.)

It was Wednesday night, and it was raining very fast. After reading "Buffalo Bill and the Giant Miner," I went to sleep, and dreamed that I and my brother were in a fight with a huge bear. We had just killed five prairie chickens and sat down to eat dinner, when a large bear came out of the bushes. He made right for my brother, when I stuck my knife into his side, but that did not do any good, and he made for me. But just then my brother came to his senses and struck the bear across the head. The bear turned on him, but I had found my gun. As quick as a flash I sent a bullet through his brain. Then I started to my brother and extended my hand to reach him, but instead I fell out on the floor and woke up.

A Dream of a Funeral.

(By Fred E. Allison, Horseshoe, N. C.)

One night I was in South Carolina, at a little place about fifty or seventy-five miles from home. I dreamed that a cousin of mine had died and that I was at her funeral at a church about one mile from home. Father was with me, and I told him my dream the next morning when I awoke. We returned home, and I related my dream to my mother and she informed me that my cousin was very low with fever, and in less than one week I attended her funeral at the same church. My cousin was well when I left home, and I had not heard of her illness until I returned.

A Fall and a Shot.

(By Vernard Gary, Mankato, Minn.)

I had gone to sleep after reading Buffalo Bill No. 107. Buffalo Bill and I were being chased by Bounding Panther and his band. I was shot in the side. We galloped along at a swift rate, and Buffalo Bill said we would have

to make the Deer's Leap. My horse did not jump way across and I fell into the chasm. I fell and fell, and when I reached the bottom I was picked up by Buffalo Bill, and then I awoke. How Buffalo Bill reached the bottom and picked me up so quickly I could not explain. The falling was caused by falling out of bed. The shot in the side was caused by my revolver slipping down from under my pillow and I had lain on it.

Adventure With a Panther.

(By Henry Doehrer, Brooklyn, N. Y.)

One night, being very tired, I went to bed and had a peculiar dream. I and a friend of mine went out for some sport in the woods. We had Rover with us, a large Newfoundland dog.

We were walking along, when we heard a low growl. Looking up in a tree, I saw a large panther and its young one. We were so frightened that we stood rooted to the spot.

Rover commenced to bark, making the panther very cautious. The young one made a leap, but was caught in Rover's mouth and killed. Seeing this, the large panther made a leap at Rover, trying to avenge the death of the young one. Rover struggled fiercely, shaking the panther off each time he pounced upon him.

At last the panther made a fierce rush and succeeded in tearing the dog to pieces. The panther then went over to its young one and licked its wounds. Finding him lifeless, he stood at bay ready to leap upon us.

Just then I heard a voice say, "Bend down, so I can get a shot at him." The voice was that of a hunter, who fired a shot and the panther rolled over, dead. I was exhausted when I woke up and found it to be a dream.

A Fox Hunt.

(By Emmett E. Grant, Hobart, N. Y.)

One night after coming home from town, and being tired, I had this dream:

I dreamed my partner and I went out fox hunting. The hound started a fox up on the mountain and brought him around where we were. I fired, but missed, and my partner fired, too, but neither one of us hit him. Just as I was going to fire again I heard a growl in the bushes and there was a big black bear coming right for me. I was just going to fire, when he grabbed the gun from my hand and was going to eat me up. My partner fired and killed him, and then I woke up.

A Dream of Foolishness.

(By A. A. Taylor, Bridgeport, Conn.)

Last night I had a very funny dream, which I will try to relate as near as I can. I retired at half-past nine o'clock, read a book for a while and fell asleep, and this is what happened:

I stepped into an air-ship as it arose from the ground. I felt very dizzy, but that soon passed away. Then the front wheels came off and we ran up against a root of a tree just as I got the horse started to run away and I found he had a hind leg caught in the front wheel of my

bicycle. I rang my bell, but too late—the balloon was losing gas already. As we sank toward the ground a young lady stepped out of the clouds and said: "Will you please lend me your shoes for a little while, for my auto has lost his, but will find them when mother shoots the hens." Just as I was going to give her my overcoat I fell off the horse cars, and my wife's little brother, George, aged two years, grabbed me and ran into a big tall man, up whom he climbed. When he reached the top story he threw me down and put one foot on my head and one on my chest, and began to choke me. I tried to escape, but no use. The guard was all around me. I was doomed. I started to run, but found I could not move a step. Just then I awoke and found I was up flat against my bedroom door, trying to go through it. This is no fake, but an actual dream.

The Collision.

(By Frank R. Miesenhilder, Palestine, Ill.)

One night, after reading in the daily papers about a collision between two fast trains, I had a very curious dream. I thought I was riding on a train going at the rate of a mile a minute. I was reading a book to pass away the time. I had just become interested in the book, when all at once I heard a loud crash and felt myself thrown violently from my seat onto the floor. The car I was in was completely demolished. I was cut and bruised in many places by the glass and the timbers which fell upon me. All around me I could hear the cries of pain and the groans of the dying and wounded. I began to try to escape from under the *débris*, but I was too weak and could not. After I had become exhausted I lay there waiting for the rescuers to help me out. While I was lying there I began to smell smoke. Then I knew that the cars were on fire. I now tried harder than ever to escape, but it was all in vain. All the time the fire was getting closer and closer to me. It was all around me, and the hungry flames had begun licking my face and hands, when all at once I awoke in a cold sweat. I was mighty thankful that it was only a dream.

Only a Dream.

(By Cecil Shea, Chicago, Ill.)

The sun was shining brightly and the air was soft and balmy.

Harry and I strolled down the deserted streets in wonderment and awe.

We had searched for two hours, but not a living soul was to be seen in any house or on any street of Chicago.

What had happened that all the people had deserted this great city?

We examined stores, houses and theatres, but nobody could be seen. In houses everything was just as the inhabitants had left them, undisturbed. We walked into one of the big department stores; everything was quiet. We climbed the stairs and got up into the sporting goods department. We each got a wheel and rode all around the floor, having a fine time.

But we soon left the store, and walked down State Street.

Standing by the curb was a large automobile. We both jumped in and Harry ran the machine.

Up and down Michigan Avenue we rode, and finally Harry suggested that we go and see if any of the banks were open.

We rode around to Dearborn Street and entered one of the banking houses there.

Everything was just as though all the employees had gone out and left everything the way it was.

Piles and piles of paper money lay on the floor of the open vault, and piles of gold and silver money were on the long tables.

We both made a rush for the gold, and crammed our pockets full.

Entering the vault, we saw long rows of canvas bags on the floor behind the paper money.

Opening one of the bags, we found it to contain silver dollars.

We carried about two bushels of the paper money out and about five bags of silver money. Then we helped ourselves to the gold, and dumped the whole lot into the rear end of the auto.

We then sped down the street in the direction of our homes, talking about the money. We made up our minds to come downtown again and help ourselves to whatever we wanted in the department stores.

We finally came to a railroad track, and there, on a sidetrack, was an engine with steam up and five coaches behind it.

We instantly left the auto, with its precious load, in the middle of the street, as there was nobody to run away with it.

Climbing up in the cab before Harry, I opened the throttle, and the train began to go.

We gradually got to going faster, until we were going at about fifty-five miles an hour.

We neared an open drawbridge, and I shut off the steam and applied the air-brake. We did not slack in the least. Then I put on the emergency brake, but that had no effect whatever.

The bridge was only a block away now, and I glanced over the boiler to see if Harry was there, but he was not; he had jumped, I thought.

I was about to jump, too, when I awoke.

A Great Robbery.

(By James F. Brady, Brockton, Mass.)

One night an Italian tramp came to my house and asked for food. Going to bed, I dreamed I was in an old beggar's house in Philadelphia. The old beggar came rushing into the room, crying: "The mint is being robbed!" Hastily picking an old musket from a corner, I hurried to the mint. Just as I turned the corner to go in, a fierce Italian made a slash at me with a stiletto, saying, at the same time: "Stand back. Carvenero will killa you." Grasping him by the waist, I said, in Italian: "I came too late, but we will rob it just the same." He fell in the snare at once, and answered back: "Sura, we willa."

He told me that three counterfeiters were in the building, trying to get the United States stamps, so as to stamp 2,000 \$20 bills, which were hidden in an old box outside the fence. Asking him to show them, we started

and coming to the place, he bent down, and as he did so, I shackled his arms behind his back and put him under a large piece of board. Rushing into the mint, through a door that they had broken, I came across three Italians tugging as hard as they could on the stamp, which weighed about three hundred pounds. Rushing across the room near a window, I pulled up some loose boards, and crawling back to them I said, in Italian: "The place is surrounded by policemen, and this is the only way to get out," pointing to the window under which my trap was stationed. The three leaped across the room and went "slam-bang!" down the trap. Sneaking down myself, I peeped around, and found that all three had been seriously injured. I bound them one by one with rope, and carried them out to where the fourth one lay. Then, hastening to the box of counterfeit money, I tore all the bills to shreds and was just kicking them around the ground, when I woke up and found the sheet torn to ribbons, the quilts and comforters hanging on the foot of the bed and my brother sitting on a chair, saying, "You're crazy, Jimmie."

On the Trinity.

(By Mike Luster, Corsicana, Texas.)

I and two more boys were camping on the Trinity River last summer. We left the main camp and went hunting, and encountered a wildcat. The other boys ran, but I stood still. I was so scared I could not get away. Presently the boys came back with the older men. But when the cat saw them he ran away. That night I dreamed I was after the same cat and had chased him into a deep hollow, when all at once a panther sprang at me. I slapped at him with my rifle barrel and he got me down and was standing over me, when I woke up. I had my knife lying by my side, and my dog, Nero, was standing by me, raving mad, as a snake had bit him. We killed him, but I hated to.

An Adventure With Bears.

(By Neil Dougherty, Wilmington, Del.)

My mother had bought me an air rifle. That day I had been playing with it all day. I was tired, so I went to bed early. I dreamed that I went out in the woods with my rifle. I saw a bear cub, and it had a chicken in its claws. I threw my rifle to my shoulder and fired. I killed the bear instantly, the bullet going through the brain. Just then I heard a rustle of leaves and a big bear stepped out before me. I fired, and missed it. It grabbed my rifle and broke it. It was about to tear me into pieces when I awoke.

A Fire Dream.

(By Jacob Rosen, Montreal, Canada.)

Last night in our house they were speaking about a fire. I went to sleep and dreamed that I was between a great crowd of people. We were looking at a fire in St. James' Street, when a wall fell down upon us. I broke my hand. I heard bells ringing. I awoke and found myself in my own house.

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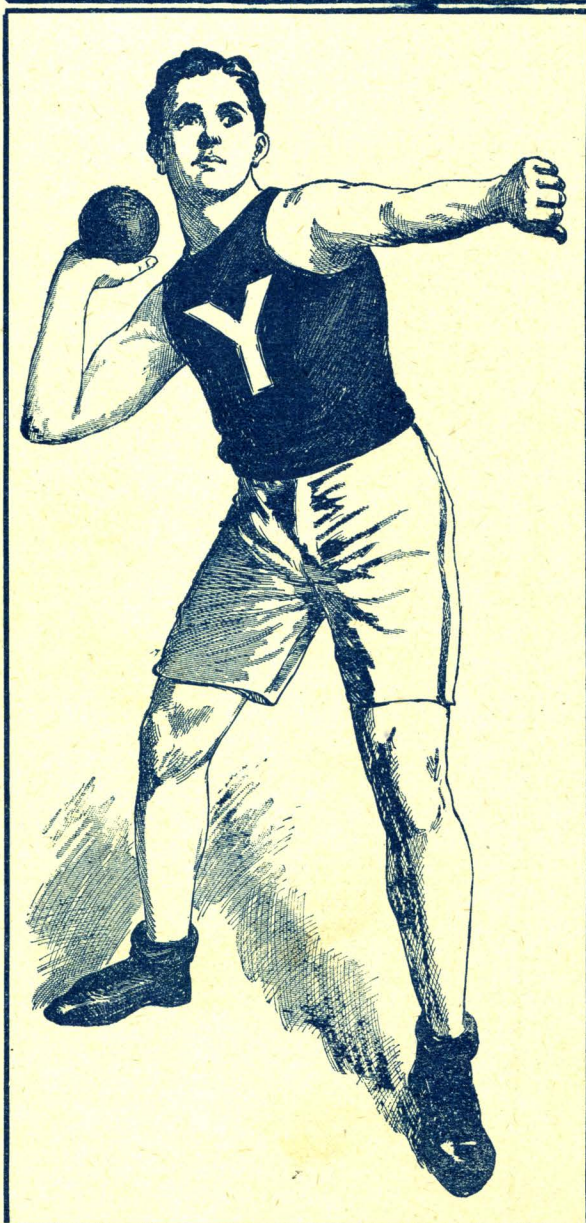
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